

RENAISSANCE FARE:
APPETITE AND AUTHORITY ON THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH STAGE

BY

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Abstract

The politics of food are naturally central to many early modern plays in part because of unstable supply and means of distribution in London. Food is a type of property that can represent a great deal of power, especially in times of scarcity. Drama, as a widely viewed popular form, had great power to affect and reflect common understandings of how bodies were constituted through actions like eating and drinking. Early modern dramatic characters use food and consumption to wield, reveal, and limit power within early modern drama; the consumers of drama did the same within early modern English culture. This study seeks new understandings of how early modern identities were established and maintained through food. In addition to all the things we might expect about the experience of food, its vital importance, availability, perishability, and cost would have been conspicuous to the early modern viewers. The eleven plays analyzed here, selected for the prominence and significance of food and consumption in their plots, include Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus* (1588); Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* (1597), *2 Henry IV* (1597), *Measure for Measure* (1604), *Titus Andronicus* (1594), and *Timon of Athens* (1607); Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603); Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613); John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613); and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and *The Magnetic Lady* (1632). Knowledge taken for granted by the contemporaries of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, Webster, and Heywood has faded alongside the popularity and availability of many food and drink items, and readers have replaced such knowledge with assumptions informed by their own culture's food beliefs and practices. This dissertation argues that the material components of appetite reflect and recast early modern power structures within drama, destabilizing the patterns of control and ownership in the food market economy, causing political dysfunction in England's body politic, constructing and revealing the social archetype of the pregnant woman, and exploring the social acceptability of extreme forms of justice.

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Introduction

Citizens of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England experienced multiple cycles of famine and plentitude, witnessed a market proliferating with foreign foodstuffs, grappled with women's participation in the resultant food economy, and continually (and sometimes rigidly) redefined ideas of dietary health and wellness. It is no wonder, then, that so many early modern plays foreground issues of food and eating.¹ The importance of food on the early modern stage manifests with sharp relief between the pregnant Duchess of Vanholt's craving for a dish of ripe grapes in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1588), Falstaff's excessive consumption of sack and tavern food in Shakespeare's *1* and *2 Henry IV* (1597), and the secretly pregnant Mistress Placentia Steel's cravings for coal and hair in Jonson's *The Magnetic Lady* (1632). The knowledge that Christians associated goose meat with Jewish communities and that "experts" blamed the meat for the supposed melancholic character of Jews² elucidates the exchange in Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613) when a porter offers "a dish of birds" from Goose Fair to Master Yellowhammer after accepting a tip from the man (1.1.85-86).³ What initially might seem like a pleasant and polite exchange in this minor example suggests an inadequate tip and a derisive porter. In this dissertation, I argue that understanding food from an

early modern perspective allows us to understand the social and political power negotiations in early modern drama as more complicated and nuanced than they otherwise appear.

Because of unstable food supply and means of distribution in London, hierarchies of food – the ways in which people privileged certain foods over others because of beliefs about health, flavor, and value – permeate many early modern plays. Especially in times of scarcity, questions of who owned, controlled, and consumed food represented a great deal of power. Joan Thirsk describes the notable food shortages that occurred in these years: “The scarcities of 1586 and 1594-6 were but a foretaste of crises that recurred in every decade between 1600 and 1650.”⁴ Thirsk argues that these frequent shortages contributed strongly to individual experiences of food in most or all regions during this time.⁵ Food economies necessarily shifted to accommodate these broad changes, but the shifts did not always happen smoothly or without consequence. Julia Briggs details how the paradigm shift from traditional feudalism to agrarian capitalism (in which former peasants rented small plots of land from absentee landlords in order to make a living selling their produce) created a new world of dietary instability for the lower classes. Briggs professes that “[t]he bad harvests of the 1590s meant that many of the workers who normally managed to maintain themselves by cultivating their own tiny plots (often no more than an acre on which to grow vegetables) and hiring out their labour, fell below subsistence level and were forced to take to the roads in search of work.”⁶ These people flocked to the towns, which were developing around trade and “the provision of services required by those with money.”⁷ The demographic crisis brought on by the 400% population growth London experienced between the beginning and the end of the sixteenth century engendered fear that these increased demands would exhaust London’s available food supply.⁸ The nutritional and behavioral ideals espoused in dietaries, recipe books, and conduct manuals printed in London during this time period

augmented this situation.⁹ Drama, as a widely viewed popular form, had great power to affect and reflect common understandings of how bodies were constituted through actions like eating and drinking.

With drama as my focus, I began this project with a set of questions about the social dynamics of food preparation and consumption on the early modern English stage. Numerous scholars have focused extensively on the fashioning of the self in the Renaissance; many others – such as Ken Albala, Robert Appelbaum, Joan Fitzpatrick, Robert Palter, David Ruiters, Colin Spencer, and Joan Thirsk – have concentrated on careful histories of food in early modern England, its literature, and beyond.¹⁰ Appelbaum’s *Aguecheek’s Beef, Belch’s Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections* represents a foundational text for the kind of material food studies in which I seek to engage. He undertakes a material/humoral analysis in order to capture the “real” experience of early modern food. He touches on early modern drama, but the study is largely rooted in archival material, examining cookbooks as literature. He ultimately argues that the thorough material analysis of food is an important gateway into other aspects of early modern culture.¹¹

Fitzpatrick addresses the materiality of food in *Shakespeare and Food*, in which she seeks to provide readers with a guide to “the range of, and conflicts between, contemporary views that informed the representations of food and feeding” in Shakespeare’s plays.¹² She focuses on issues of morality and moderation revealed by material analyses of foods, arguing that the dietaries she examines against Shakespeare’s plays provide information that would have been applied to correct moral and physical problems. Where Fitzpatrick covers food and morality in Shakespeare’s works, I focus on food and power structures on a group of texts not limited to Shakespeare. When Fitzpatrick and I cover similar texts, our material approaches yield distinct

results, suggesting that scholarly inquiry has not fully tapped the material richness of food in these plays.

Palter engages in a symbolic, encyclopedic study in *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots*. His thorough work restores lost horticultural information and seeks to uncover food's "lived" experience. He takes for granted, however, that food associations are consistent from the early modern period to today.¹³ Palter's reading of *The Duchess of Malfi* begins with an observation that the apricot scene in the play is not essential to the plot and proceeds to point out that the entire play represents a puzzling reversal of the usually positive connotations of fresh fruit. He ends somewhat weakly by revising his observation to state that the apricot episode (and fruit in the play more generally) serves to contribute "something essential" to the play's atmosphere. Instead, I argue that the view of apricots as unwholesome combines with the play's ending to demonstrate that the Duchess's indulgence in the forbidden fruit leads to the loss of her family and happiness and the symbolic reduction of her body to food for her brothers.

Ruiter engages in a symbolic analysis of festivity (and, of course, feasting) in Shakespeare's history plays, exploring the application of the concept of "festive history." He analyzes food to argue that festivity never ultimately gives way to order in the history genre.¹⁴ In the *Henry IV* plays, Ruiter argues that Hal purposefully creates a "feast of Falstaff" in order to build public support for his kingship, intending to discard Falstaff when he becomes inconvenient. However, my explication of the play's food, which is rooted in a material analysis of eating and drinking, intimates that Prince Hal's entanglement with Falstaff is quite genuine.

My concerns are distinct from those addressed by the above scholars: I am specifically interested in the intersections between the materiality of food and the self. Eating a dish of prunes, a bowl of blackberries, an unripe apricot, or a serving of roasted pig came with an

entirely different set of cultural ideas about health, flavor, and value in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than it does today. Ideas change things, and I am interested in the ways that cultural ideas about foods *change* the foods to which they apply. For example, learning that a significant subset of the human population experiences the flavor of the herb cilantro as identical to the flavor of soap can dramatically affect the experience of cilantro for those who previously enjoyed the herb. I engage this phenomenon – the materiality of food – and explore how it impacted the experience of the physical self in significant and far-reaching ways: How did people imagine food as part of the physical body? How did they understand nutrition? And how did an early modern audience member’s physical and psychological experience of food influence their reading and understanding of food on the stage?

A study of material food must necessarily acknowledge the bodies that consume it and the beliefs that governed those bodies. In *The Body Embarrassed*, Gail Kern Paster studies early modern bodies by examining the way subjects policed their excretions.¹⁵ She scrutinizes the humoral body through issues of embarrassment and the use of shame for social control, arguing for “the place of physiological theory in the social history of the body.”¹⁶ Where Paster focuses her study with the gendered body’s excretions, I wish to study both bodies and culture through the depiction of *consumption*. My work owes a great deal to her groundbreaking readings of bodies in early modern literature, however, and I am further intrigued by the contradiction she identifies between popular medical practice and the social practice of strict bodily refinement.

An understanding of the intersection of bodies and food also benefits from an understanding of how people conceived of their power to impact their own health. In *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, Michael Schoenfeldt argues that the Galenic model of medicine is an experiential approach to understanding health, empowering the individual to

fashion unique remedies for their own illnesses.¹⁷ My goal has been to use a similar line of inquiry but on a different topic, with the hope of understanding the way individuals approached food: What did individuals choose to put into their bodies, why did they make those choices, and how were the choices oppressive, empowering, or culturally inscribed?

Since I am interested specifically in depictions of food on the stage, I have sought to understand how the genre of drama both reflects and affects contemporary ideas about food. Jean Howard, in *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, examines how the stage engages with and reflects the changing social landscape of Renaissance culture.¹⁸ She seeks to characterize the “ideological work” performed by the theater, to explore the role that the public theater had in producing such ideologies, and to engage with the many contradictions she has encountered in order to examine more broadly how institutions effect social change with varying levels of consistency and perceptibility. Howard exposes the power struggles that surrounded the stage, examining the sometimes-contradictory ideologies expressed by the theater’s material practices and plots. She demonstrates that the combination of discourses and performance traditions on the public stage revealed the interests of some ideologies while opening space for the production of new ones. I have aspired to engage the literature and history on a similar theoretical level in my examination of food.

My project expands the scholarly examination of material objects and practices in order to discuss social structures and ideologies. In *Materializing Gender in Early Modern England*, Will Fisher examines the materiality of gender in order to argue that, during the early modern period, people conceptualized masculinity and femininity in unexpected ways.¹⁹ He suggests that extra-bodily components such as handkerchiefs, codpieces, beards and hair signified gender and impacted its experience. He argues that people believed that gender differences resulted from

hierarchical realities (rather than caused them). Like Howard, he uses objects in order to engage discussions of social ideology. Fischer's examination of the materiality and gendered meaning of personal objects and accessories has contributed to my interest in the gendered meaning of food.

In this project, I have combined canonical and non-canonical texts to look at a subject that has both medical and social aspects, using especially the work of Gail Kern Paster, Michael Schoenfeldt, and Jean Howard as methodological models. I examine food and drink comprehensively and broadly through careful close reading, historical context, and archival materials. By interrogating the preoccupation with food and eating in these plays, we may begin to understand how the early modern consumer thought about and experienced food on a regular basis. I seek to strike a balance between qualitative analysis, which uses thick description and treats objects as "points of intersection for myriad relations of property and power," and quantitative analysis, which examines objects through "patterns of production, consumption, and ownership."²⁰ I use descriptions of early modern beliefs about and uses of food as the core of my methodology, researching the hierarchies of and attitudes toward the foods mentioned and wielded on stage. This process reveals some of the meaning that an early modern audience may have gleaned from the complex use of food in early modern English drama. I demonstrate that understanding food from an early modern perspective usefully illuminates the social and political power negotiations in the early modern plays I examine.

I am concerned first with a material analysis of food, drink, and consumption in these plays and what a close reading can reveal for their context and meaning. I investigate hierarchies and uses of, and attitudes toward, the consumable products mentioned and wielded on stage. As such, this is a study of the materiality of food and drink as well as how food is signified through language and how that language might have influenced and reflected how early modern English

people related to one another. Food is unique in its ability to work both materially and symbolically, since it is very physical, very experienced, very pleasurable (or not), etc.; but also, it is the material which constitutes ourselves, and thus the *ideas* for which it stands are as important as the material itself. Material analysis, then, usefully augments symbolic interpretation.

The chapters that follow seek new understandings of how early modern identities were established and maintained through food. I have selected the eleven plays analyzed here based on the prominence and significance of food and consumption in their plots. I begin with Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613) and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). Critics commonly associate both of these plays with food, and both are both rife with material and symbolic feasting. Additionally, they emerge immediately after a time of great instability and change in London's food market, and beginning with this change allows us to better understand food both before and after it. I go on to examine Shakespeare's *1 and 2 Henry IV* (1597), which focus extensively on Falstaff's consumption of food and sack. Though they predate the plays in Chapter 1 by fewer than 20 years, food functions with marked difference in the social and political world of Falstaff. Next, I chose Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus* (1588), Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604), John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), and Ben Jonson's *The Magnetic Lady* (1632) for their descriptions of pregnant women craving food. These are the only four early modern plays I have found which depict such cravings. Finally, I selected Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1594) and *Timon of Athens* (1607) for their descriptions of cannibalism and of starvation; I discuss these plays with Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), which also associates starvation with cannibalism. Early modern dramatic characters use food and consumption to wield, reveal, and

limit power within early modern drama; the consumers of drama did the same within early modern English culture.

In Chapter 1, “Food, Materiality, and Power in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Bartholomew Fair*,” I argue that these plays reflected and contributed to the changing food culture engendered by the burgeoning market economy and scarcity in 1613-14 London, demonstrating how people could use food transactions to destabilize power structures. In these plays, food is more than just a backdrop or an ideology: it is a visceral preoccupation that informs a complete understanding of early modern attitudes toward shifting social roles in the ever-evolving and expanding food economy. The plays demonstrate an awareness of food’s importance, reflecting and contributing to evolving ideas about the increasingly prominent roles of women in the new economy. The cultural desire to stabilize and regulate women’s participation and power within the developing model of commercial capitalism explains why both of these plays anxiously grapple with ideas of women as food.

Chaste Maid habitually refers to its female characters as consumable food while acknowledging and even celebrating the emergence of women into the world of food exchange. *Bartholomew Fair* similarly conflates women and food but struggles with how to characterize Ursula, whose considerable power in the food-market economy renders her less consumable. Both *Chaste Maid* and *Bartholomew Fair* end with a return from the extra-domestic transactions of the market to the safer domestic transactions of hospitality with plans for large, communal meals. The plays’ preoccupation with food and eating reveals the importance of the consumer’s daily interaction with food markets as well as the significance of food ownership, control, and consumption. The plays’ food transactions – situations in which food changes hands and/or ownership – reveal the delicate balance in food exchanges that most women would have

navigated out of necessity, honing their skills without emphasizing either the public nature or the power component of their participation in food economies. With their use of food in these plays, Middleton and Jonson magnify the cultural anxiety surrounding women's participation in food economies and highlight the potential for power connected to the deceptively simple acts of exchanging food. Acknowledging the significance with which these plays' original audiences would have perceived food and food transactions reveals the narrow spaces that women could use to destabilize, and even subvert, the new economy's emerging patterns of power and ownership.

In Chapter 2, "Disordered Consumption: Food, Surfeit, and the Body Politic in *1* and *2 Henry IV*," I argue that the relationship between Falstaff's disordered consumption and Prince Hal's body natural resembles the relationship between political disorder and England's body politic. While the *Henry IV* plays contain a rich variety of food descriptions, they also rely upon elaborate feeding imagery in order to characterize the larger political situation. In this portrayal, soldiers and blood function as food and drink for a ravenous, parched England; armies subsist by "eating the air" (2:1.3.28); the people of England have devoured and disgorged the late King Richard before consuming their own vomit; war is a wild dog which "shall flesh his tooth" on innocents (2:4.3.260); and the royal crown feeds upon an ever-weakening King Henry. An analysis of the plays' material food sheds considerable light on this feeding imagery, providing the historical context with which to understand what it means for England to daub the "thirsty entrance" of her soil with her children's blood (1:1.1.56). A study of food and consumption in these plays would be incomplete without a thorough consideration of this imagery. Additionally, an examination of this feeding imagery would be incomplete without a thorough understanding of the play's more literal food.

Hal's place within the "immaterial Crown" and his father's political vulnerability together manifest in an unusually strong connection between Prince Hal and England's body politic in *1 Henry IV*. As such, the influence of Falstaff's disordered consumption on Hal forms a systematic parallel with the influence of England's political disorder on the body politic. Images of gluttony, excess, and imbalance depict the political disorder in England's body politic: the wine of the tavern corresponds with the blood of soldiers, while the cheap food is linked with their bodies. A material analysis of consumption in *2 Henry IV* reveals a continuation and intensification of the dysfunctional portrayal of consumption in Part 1. As Falstaff's influence over Prince Hal grows, England's government becomes even more precarious. Falstaff's consumption-related debt presents an increasing problem to the knight and Prince Hal's admission of an "appetite ... not princely got" bodes poorly for his promise as king. The symbolism of Part 2 builds upon the metaphor of the disordered body politic, focusing on images of excess and surfeit. Falstaff and political disorder seem to feed off one another until England gulps the body of King Henry and King Hal rejects Falstaff as a companion. This examination reclaims some of the cultural richness that early modern audiences would have experienced and reveals a connection between consumption and the perceived roots of political dysfunction in this period. At the end of *2 Henry IV*, the consumption that threatens to burst the play's seams begins channeling outward to France, promising an England more comfortably contained within her borders.

In Chapter 3, "Voracious Mothers: Craving and Identity in *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and *The Magnetic Lady*," I argue that between 1588 and 1632, a narrative of ever-increasing contempt for female immoderation emerges within early modern English drama. This narrative suggests a cultural connection between pregnancy

cravings and original sin and accompanies an increasing scrutiny of pregnancy during this time period. In *Dr. Faustus*, Faustus and the Duchess of Vanholt treat pregnancy cravings as private, but not shameful, features of early modern procreation. In contrast, Mistress Elbow's craving for stewed prunes in *Measure for Measure* draws attention to the connection between Eve's sin of eating forbidden fruit and her biblical punishment for that sin – pain during childbirth. Mistress Elbow's pregnant, longing body suggests a deviant appetite for both food and sex. Pompey's story implies that her consumption of prunes and illicit sex – both forbidden to a married woman – fuels the creation of a monster in her womb. In *The Duchess of Malfi*, Bosola characterizes the Duchess's craving for apricots as a humiliating and grotesque feature of her maternal body. Webster's treatment of this scene depicts a cultural rejection of the features of pregnancy that were considered normal and healthy a mere 25 years before. The scene situates pregnancy as punishment for female sin rather than as a socially and culturally valuable state. Finally, in *The Magnetic Lady*, the secretly pregnant Mistress Placentia Steel eats coal, lime, hair, soap-ash, and loam. Historically, medical practitioners read the consumption of non-nutritive substances as indicative of “depraved” appetites and humoral imbalances. When the play reveals Placentia to be a simple servant instead of a noblewoman, the audience can finally make sense of Placentia's grotesque – even demon-possessed – body.

These depictions of the vulnerable pregnant body participate in an escalating narrative of female immoderation and original sin. Increasingly critical portrayals of pregnant women both reflect a cultural phenomenon and function as a kind of scapegoat, or a worst-case scenario that society might use as a basis of comparison. Such depictions would normalize some craving behaviors (those interpreted as less intense, severe, or monstrous than each craving depicted), while casting the rest of them as monstrous and problematic. In this way, the narrative could also

serve to create more space for acceptable behavior. However, the escalation of this narrative simultaneously hints at a deepening crisis for the early modern pregnant woman. Where a material analysis of some of the pregnancy cravings in these plays signifies a vitamin deficiency to today's reader, to an early modern reader they eventually came to represent moral depravity, original sin, and monstrosity. While the Duchess of Vanholt's grapes in 1588 do not reveal a nutritional deficiency, Mistress Quickly's longing for prunes in 1604 implies a need for iron. The Duchess of Malfi's longing for apricots in 1613 blatantly suggests an iron deficiency. By 1632, Placentia's clear affliction of pregnancy-induced pica, a type of malnutrition, suggests a more severe nutritional deficiency. An examination of food in these plays suggests the precarious but complex position of pregnant women. This trajectory implies that as the archetype of the pregnant woman became more socially unacceptable, her consumption of foodstuffs came under increased scrutiny while her ability to meet the increased nutritional demands of her body became more difficult. Thus, by exploring food's material significance – the ways in which an early modern audience member would have understood and interpreted these cravings – we deepen our understanding of the complex cultural phenomena these plays represent.

Finally, in Chapter 4, "Consumption, Justice, and Human Flesh in *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," I argue that a material analysis of consumption at the extremes of justice reveals how early modern dramatists and audiences perceived appetite as a tool for revenge, repentance, and redemption. I present a material analysis of food and then expand my methodology to look at the physiological meanings and bodily consequences of decisions about consumption. In these three plays, attempts to achieve justice are closely connected to the consumption of human flesh through cannibalism, starvation, or both. Their plots explore the difficult and fascinating situations at the boundaries of acceptable

consumption, reflecting and interpreting for the audience the ways in which the consumption of human flesh contributed to ideas of justice. By feeding Chiron and Demetrius to their mother, re-assimilating them into the body from which they were born, *Titus Andronicus*'s protagonist attempts to end the cycle of revenge perpetuated between him and Tamora. While his revenge successfully restores his family to the top of the play's "food chain" and effectively disposes of his enemies, it shifts the audience's sympathies to Tamora and her unwitting cannibalism. Vengeance is physically complete, but still empty. Where consumption in *Titus Andronicus* deals with excessive revenge, consumption in *Timon of Athens* addresses excessive repentance. Through its treatment of nutritional excess and austerity, *Timon* offers a recipe for expiation and a perspective on the differences between virtuous and sinful foods. Timon's adoption of Apemantus's philosophies and behaviors is a means of repentance, self-cleansing, and self-preservation. The representations of meat and wine in this play emphasize the destructiveness of Timon's prior overconsumption; the portrayal of roots and water depict the reconstitution of his body. Timon's attempts at justice, however, seem to yield him no comfort, and they certainly do little to appease the leaders of Athens who wish for his return. Like Timon's strict fast, Mistress Anne's act of starvation in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is an attempt to atone for her sin. Unlike Timon's bodily reconstitution, though, Mistress Anne's fast from all food and drink should be read as an act of self-consumption in which she depletes the flesh that has propagated her sin. While the ending of this play is troubling and problematic, from the perspective of justice and the extremes of consumption, Anne's decision to starve to death allows an expression of a burden which otherwise would remain untold. Anne uses her starvation to articulate her guilt and expunge her body, the material component of her sin.

These situations raise questions about the material consequences of the active and passive consumption of human flesh. Attempts at grappling with justice and consumption in political tragedies such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens* may seem less straightforward to critics and audiences because of these plays' alienation from the everyday tasks of food acquisition, preparation, and consumption. While Titus and his family sit down around their dinner table, and while plenty of eating happens around the tables of Timon, neither of these plays reveals the kind of intimate daily happenings around the preparation, serving, and consumption of food that predominate in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. The politics of food and flesh, then, might seem most naturally situated around the domestic tragedy's ever-present dinner table, wielded by the women who were most intimately familiar with the necessarily "meaty" operations of running a household. The sphere of the domestic tragedy genre, conversely, may spur critics to pronounce *A Woman Killed with Kindness* a celebration of female agency rather than a troubling story of guilt-induced anorexia with a well-ordered outcome. Since food and drink are important conduits of cultural meaning, the situations surrounding the consumption of human flesh have the opportunity to be particularly significant. A material analysis of cannibalism and starvation not only reveals how early modern dramatists and audiences perceived appetite as an instrument for revenge, penitence, and redemption, then, but also demonstrates who might be judged as capable of successfully performing such acts.

Food is different from other forms of property because it is essential for human survival. To the early modern English person, the experience of food was inextricable from the knowledge of this power. In addition to all the things we might expect about the experience of food, its vital importance, availability, perishability, and cost would have been conspicuous to the early modern viewers of the eleven plays I examine. In today's era of well-stocked supermarkets, the

power of food may be less than obvious, but it becomes apparent in the scenes I examine and would have mattered to the plays' audience members. Knowledge taken for granted by the contemporaries of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, Webster, and Heywood has faded alongside the popularity and availability of many food and drink items, and readers have replaced such knowledge with assumptions informed by their own culture's food beliefs and practices. By exploring the material significance of food, we may deepen our understanding of the plays and their historical contexts. In this dissertation, I argue that material components of appetite – food, drink, non-food items that are consumed, and consuming bodies – reflect and recast early modern power structures within drama by destabilizing the patterns of control and ownership in the food market economy, causing political dysfunction in England's body politic, constructing and revealing the social archetype of the pregnant woman, and exploring the social acceptability of extreme forms of justice.

Notes to Introduction

¹ I use “early modern” here to refer to the period broadly, but my plays span the years 1588 to 1632 and, due to this scope, I intend my conclusions to apply only to these years.

² Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 68.

³ Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, Eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 907-962.

⁴ Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (London: Continuum, 2007), 59.

⁵ Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 64.

⁶ Julia Briggs, *This Stage-Play World: Texts and Contexts 1580-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 31.

⁷ Briggs, *This Stage-Play World*, 26-29.

⁸ Briggs, *This Stage-Play World*, 28-29.

⁹ Though some of the plays I examine are set in places other than early modern London, they were written by London playwrights for London audiences and thus reflect and affect London primarily. This, then, is a London-centric study.

¹⁰ See Albala, *Eating Right*; Robert Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food Among the Early Moderns* (University of Chicago Press, 2006); Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Robert Palter, *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots and Other Literary Fruits* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2002); David Ruiter, *Shakespeare's Festive*

History (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Colin Spencer, *British Food: An Extraordinary Thousand Years of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*. Albala, Spencer, and Thirsk chronicle the history of food in the time period, where Appelbaum, Fitzpatrick, Palter, and Ruitter examine food in literature.

¹¹ Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef*, xvii.

¹² Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, 1.

¹³ Palter, *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots*, 274-76.

¹⁴ David Ruitter, *Shakespeare's Festive History*.

¹⁵ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

¹⁶ Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 3.

¹⁷ Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁹ Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁰ See Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 1-31.

Chapter 1

Food, Materiality, and Power in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Bartholomew Fair*

Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613) and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) are rich with the depiction of eating and preoccupied with the ownership, control, and consumption of food. In *Chaste Maid*, Master Allwit displays intense anxiety toward the women attending the christening he hosts because they "have no consciences at sweetmeats ... they never think of payment." He observes that their appetites for comfits and long-plums "would kill me an if I paid for't" (3.2.83).¹ In *Bartholomew Fair*, the Littlewits are put out by Zeal-of-the-Land Busy's appetite: "we have such a tedious life with him for his diet" (1.2.70-71).² Later, the man is discovered hiding in the pantry "fast by the teeth i'the cold turkey pie ... with a great white loaf on his left hand and a glass of malmsey on his right" (1.6.35-38).³ As these and other scenes suggest, food and food economies are of central importance to these plays. For example, Busy consents to let Win eat pig "at Pie Corner" in London without any coaxing at all. It is the pig she pretends to long for – from Bartholomew Fair – that presents a moral quandary. This has baffled scholars who assume that the question is purely about the morality of consuming pig, but if Busy's anxieties center on the market of the fair – who controls the food and profits from its sale – his assumptions begin to clarify. In this chapter, I argue that

these plays reflect and contribute to the changing food culture engendered by the burgeoning market economy and the recently experienced famine in 1613-14 London, highlighting ways that ordinary people could use food to exercise power.

Scenes focused on the consumption of food in these plays have been granted limited critical attention: David Bevington, in the Norton introduction to *Chaste Maid*, even goes so far as to argue that the two major food scenes (the Promoters and the christening) are “gratuitous” and “extraneous to a tightly managed plot,” representing simply “a wonderful vignette of London life of the time.”⁴ Formalist critics have been primarily concerned with the interrelationship of the many plots in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. Richard Levin traces symmetrical patterns of character and action and draws the play’s themes from these patterns, arguing that the Promoters’ scene and the christening scene derive their literary value solely from their sharp contrast with the wholesome, uncorrupted relationship of Moll and Touchwood.⁵ The critical orthodoxy treats *Bartholomew Fair* similarly: arguments center on locating a protagonist and the most important elements of the story. Levin argues that the disintegration of parties and rearrangement of relationships constitute the center of the action and that the fair and its denizens function as a static background on which the visitors act.⁶ While scholars such as Lori Schroder Haslem, Elena Levy-Navarro, Shannon Miller, and Gail Kern Paster have acknowledged the importance of food in these plays, they have considered food primarily in terms of ideology and semiotics, discussing the way “food” or “consumption” applies to another theme or topic or examining the play for broadly relevant food metaphors.⁷ None of these scholars has made arguments that are *about* food.

Furthermore, no critical undertaking has examined the materiality of food, questioning our assumption that seventeenth-century audiences experienced food similarly to twenty-first

century readers. Only by interrogating the preoccupation with food and eating in these plays may we begin to understand how the early modern consumer thought about and experienced food on a regular basis: what foods were available; how food was produced, procured, and prepared; and what people believed about its nutritional value and flavor. I will consider how the audience member with a bit of flour caked on her hand from kneading the next day's bread would have understood the significance of the food in these plays as the very substance of life. I balance my methodology between qualitative analysis, which uses thick description and treats objects as "points of intersection for myriad relations of property and power," and quantitative analysis, which examines objects through "patterns of production, consumption, and ownership."⁸ I will use the texts of the plays and descriptions of food beliefs as the core of my argument, researching the attitudes toward the foods mentioned and wielded on stage. This will illuminate some of the meaning that an original audience may have gleaned from the plays' rich use of food. I will then use this information to discover and examine relevant patterns of food's ownership, control, and consumption. This study examines the materiality of food, then, as well as how food is signified through language and how that language might have influenced and reflected how people related to one another. Natasha Korda argues that movable household objects granted early modern women a measure of economic power and control;⁹ extending Korda's analysis, I wish to examine the effects of women's roles in both domestic and extra-domestic food transactions – situations in which food changes hands and/or ownership – as well as some of the social and cultural reactions to those roles. Food is different from other forms of property because of its placement in the hierarchy of human needs as well as its consumable nature and its perishability. These factors amplify the early modern household's dependence on markets and other reliable structures of distribution.

To the early modern English person, the experience of food was inextricable from the knowledge of its power. In addition to all the things we might expect about the experience of food, neither its vital importance nor its availability, perishability, or cost would have been lost to the early modern viewers of *Chaste Maid* and *Bartholomew Fair*. In today's era of well-stocked supermarkets, the power of food may be less than obvious, but it becomes apparent in the food scenes I examine and would have mattered to the plays' audience members. This paradigm is noteworthy in the way that otherwise poor, destitute characters access food's power, and it is also important to observe how already-powerful characters attempt to use their own power through the control of food. In the pages that follow, I will argue not only that the original audience members would have cared about the way food is portrayed in these plays, but that both plays reflected and contributed to the changing food culture engendered by the burgeoning market economy and the recently experienced period of scarcity in 1613-14 London, highlighting ways that ordinary people could use their participation in food transactions to destabilize (and even subvert) existing power structures.

Historical Context

Because of unstable supply and means of distribution in post-1610 London, the hierarchies of food as well as the question of who owned, controlled, and consumed food are naturally central to these plays. Because of its importance to survival, food can represent more power than many other types of property, especially in times of scarcity. Joan Thirsk describes the notable food shortages that occurred in the years immediately preceding both *Chaste Maid* (1613) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614): "The whole period starting in 1600 is noticeable for the sharp shocks regularly administered by cereal shortages. The scarcities of 1586 and 1594-6 were

but a foretaste of crises that recurred in every decade between 1600 and 1650.”¹⁰ Thirsk argues that these regularly occurring shortages contributed strongly to individual experiences of food in most or all regions during this time.¹¹ Between the years of 1607 and 1613, multiple royal proclamations warned citizens about food shortages and took such measures as prohibiting grain exports.¹² It is not a coincidence, then, that two plays concerned largely with food and appetite appear toward the end of this period of heightened scarcity.

Food economies were also shifting at this time: F. J. Fisher observes that the authorities’ perpetual concern for London’s food supplies caused hyper-awareness of the market system that grew, gathered, and exchanged foodstuffs.¹³ As a result of the city’s growth and increased demand, “the production of fruit, hops, and vegetables rose from the position of insignificant and neglected branches of general farming almost to the status of independent industries.”¹⁴ In 1615, vendors at Cheapside and other markets (Newgate Market, Leadenhall, and Gracechurch Street) were so overwhelmed by food-trade business that they discussed Smithfield as a necessary alternative common marketplace.¹⁵ Fisher argues that by the early seventeenth century, “there was a general feeling that the city’s appetite was developing more quickly than the country’s ability to satisfy it.”¹⁶ Alan Everitt argues that the increase in scale of market operations constituted a major “marketing problem” for the expanding economy.¹⁷

Because of women’s domestic roles – household management, food preparation, and hospitality functions – food was a unique type of property to which they had considerable access. This access was complicated by the behavioral ideals espoused in recipe books and conduct manuals printed in London during this time period. The printed marginalia in Gervase Markham’s *The English Housewife*, originally published in 1615, encourages women to eat

modestly from their own gardens and not to acquire foods from the market or any unfamiliar or foreign sources:

'Of her diet.' Let her dyet be wholesome and cleanly, prepared at due howers, and Cookt with care and diligence, let it be rather to satisfie nature then our affections, and apter to kill hunger then reuiue new appetites, let it proceed more from the prouision of her owne yard, then the furniture of the markets; and let it be rather esteemed for the familiar acquaintance she hath with it, then for the strangenesse and raritie it bringeth from other Countries.¹⁸

This advice that women focus on their ability to grow and harvest food from their own yards and place higher value in local, familiar foods was consistent with sermons and handbooks that advised women to “keep to their homes, and away from the market.”¹⁹ David Underdown examines the relationship between the advance of the capitalistic market and women’s independence, suggesting that “[t]he growth of a market economy may thus have given more women a greater sense of independence, making men liable to retaliate when they encountered instances of flagrant defiance of accustomed patriarchal order.”²⁰

These ideals, however, were unrealistic. Korda points out that Markham’s book was based on recipes that utilized costly and exotic ingredients (available to the early modern English woman only through market outlets),²¹ while Amy Louise Erickson reveals that the injunction for women to stay indoors was unachievable given that they had to leave the house for regular visits to the market in order to uphold household responsibilities.²² John Norden observed in 1594 that the wives of husbandmen commonly went to the market several times per week to sell such items as “mylke, butter, cheese, apples, pearres, frumentye,”²³ hens, chyckens, egges, baken, and a thousand other country drugges, which good huswives can frame and find to gett a

pennye.”²⁴ It is in the context of expanding and distrusted food markets, then, that the Wench in *Chaste Maid* plots to transfer her baby to the Promoters and the city dwellers from *Bartholomew Fair* venture into the unfamiliar atmosphere of Ursula’s booth.²⁵ In these plays, women garner power from food by participating in increasingly common extra-domestic food transactions, such as trips to the market for increasingly available foreign ingredients and eating away from home.

Food in *Chaste Maid*

A Chaste Maid in Cheapside focuses largely on appetite for and consumption of meat, forbidden by the law during the Lenten season in which the play is set. The play includes two distinct scenes that revolve around food transactions. The Promoters’ scene (2.2) depicts a woman using a food to dupe a Promoter who runs a corrupt market situation, while the christening scene (3.2) exposes food-based strictures in hospitality situations. Together, these scenes provide a vivid picture of an anxiously shifting food economy. Cheapside was the chief commercial street in the heart of old London.²⁶ Cheapside contained hundreds of shops and trading plots; its side streets and lanes, including Bread Street, Milk Street, Honey Lane, and Friday Street (for the fishmongers), were named after the items sold there.²⁷ Appropriately, then, rich description and a preoccupation with food’s ownership, control, and consumption characterize the two food scenes. I wish to demonstrate that these scenes are essential both to a thorough reading of the play’s tendency to refer to women as food-property and to an understanding of the historical experience and significance of food. Women *as* food are less threatening than women who *control* food: the anxiety-producing necessity of women’s participation in food transactions solicits an ideological collapse of the women with the food they handle so adeptly.

In addition to its obsession with food control and ownership, this play habitually uses language to compare its female characters to food. When women are referred to as food, usually by their husbands or sexual partners, a picture emerges in which women are consumed or, at least, consumable. In an aside in Act 1, Scene 1, Touchwood Jr. refers first to the Welsh Gentlewoman as Sir Walter's "ewe-mutton" (a common euphemism for prostitute) and then to Moll in terms of meat: "I must hasten it, or else peak o' famine; her blood's mine, and that's the surest. Well, knight, that choice spoil is only kept for me" (1.1.144-48). He continues, to Moll, "Turn not to me till thou mayst lawfully; it but whets my stomach" (1.1.150-51). Maudlin's greeting to Sir Walter invites him to "draw near and taste the welcome of the city" (1.1.161-62) by kissing her. Touchwood Sr. builds on this imagery when he offers to provide his Wench's sister a husband to replace the marriage he has destroyed with his sexual bouts: "I'll tender her a husband. I keep of purpose two or three gulls in pickle to eat such mutton with, and she shall choose one" (2.1.80-82). Touchwood suggests that he has birds preserved and stored in brine that will make the "mutton" more palatable. The depiction of the woman's new husband consuming her creates a disturbing metaphor for marriage in which the woman who is no longer sexually desired (and who cannot be financially supported) by Touchwood Sr. is disposed into the belly of another man.²⁸

This woman-as-meat model is embraced by Allwit – a man who has, for four years, encouraged another man to meet the sexual needs of his wife and the financial needs of his family. Allwit, out of gratitude that Sir Walter bears the brunt of worry and responsibility for Mrs. Allwit's sexual fidelity, asks, "what affliction nature more constrains / Than feed the wife plump for another's veins" (1.2.47-48). Allwit expresses gratitude that he is in charge neither of his wife's satisfaction nor of her sexual fidelity, and his language indicates that he is merely

plumping and caring for an animal that will be fed to another man. Later, Allwit indicates to Yellowhammer, while disguised, that he is glad to make his living by selling his wife, just as meat peddlers make their living by selling meat: “as other trades thrive—butchers by selling flesh, poulters by venting conies, or the like” (4.1.235-236). Rather than seeing himself as a cuckold, Allwit prefers to think of his wife as the valuable animal commodity by which he makes his comfortable living.

Tim also comments on his future wife in terms of meat: “Oh, delicious! ... ‘Tis a true saying, ‘There’s nothing tastes so sweet as your Welsh mutton” (4.1.159-60). Perhaps just as severely, he rejects his sister for looking unseemly after being dragged through the river: “She’s but half my sister now; as far as the flesh goes, the rest may be sold to fishwives” (4.4.30-31). Like the comments of Allwit and Touchwood, Tim’s language indicates that women are comparable to objects for consumption and trade. All of these examples suggest a view of women as consumed or consumable property.

In addition to its rich symbolic references to food, *Chaste Maid* engages food on a more material level. In the first of the play’s two scenes that deal specifically with the materiality of food, a wench outwits two city officials designated to enforce Lenten restrictions on the sale and consumption of meat. According to Diarmaid MacCulloch, unlike Protestants on the Continent, English Protestants retained traditionally Catholic restrictions on the consumption of meat during Lent for several generations, permitting only the consumption of fish flesh. The primary justification of this exception was that the English fishing industry needed support.²⁹ This situation may partially explain the lax attitudes toward Lenten meat prohibitions depicted in this play. It seems that all of the characters seek a way to work the system to their advantage without concern for any spiritual ramifications, and the Promoters consume, gift, or sell the meat they

confiscate from those who have not paid them off.³⁰ Middleton depicts the Promoters as greedy and power-hungry, impugning a corrupt system in which powerful men use their government-granted control to harass the citizens of London.

When Allwit introduces the Promoters, he revels in describing their position and ridiculing their motives:

Ha, how now? What are these that stand so close
 At the street-corner, pricking up their ears,
 And snuffing up their noses, like rich men's dogs
 When the first course goes in? By the mass, promoters!
 'Tis so, I hold my life; and planted there
 To arrest the dead corpses of poor calves and sheep,
 Like ravenous creditors, that will not suffer
 The bodies of their poor departed debtors
 To go to th'grave, but e'en in death to vex
 And stay the corpse with bills of Middlesex. (2.2.57-66)

Allwit begins by comparing the Promoters to dogs who are accustomed to being spoiled with table scraps from their wealthy owners' meals. He then compares them with "ravenous creditors" who would use the corrupt Middlesex court to drag the dead bodies of their debtors to jail or court to prevent their proper burial. Allwit creates a vivid comparison, likening the bodies of the confiscated debtors to the bodies of the confiscated calves and sheep and drawing attention to the deprivation suffered by the debtors' families (who were prevented from burying their loved ones) and those unlucky enough to be discovered with meat (who were prevented from consuming their food). Allwit continues,

This Lent will fat the whoresons up with sweetbreads,
 And lard their whores with lamb-stones; what their golls
 Can clutch goes presently to their Molls and Dolls:
 The bawds will be so fat with what they earn,
 Their chins will hang like udders by Easter eve
 And, being stroked, will give the milk of witches. (2.2.67-72)

Here, Allwit accuses the Promoters of using the meat they confiscate both to fatten themselves with “sweetbreads,” the thymus glands and pancreata of calves and lambs, organs that were considered delicate fare especially appropriate for invalids or convalescents.³¹ He claims that they “lard their whores” with lamb stones (lamb testicles) and that their hands greedily clutch meat with which to pay their prostitutes. He then criticizes how fat they are likely to get by the end of Lent and suggests that their chins will soon give “the milk of witches.” “Witch’s milk” refers to nipple discharge in newborn babies that results from high levels of maternal hormones,³² and in using this term Allwit calls attention to the perversely pampered state of the grown men who live by taking others’ provisions. Allwit’s words express deep disdain for the Promoters’ behavior by criticizing their eating habits, which he judges as extravagant, excessively delicate, and dishonest. Many of his accusations about the Promoters’ dishonest use of meat are substantiated in the Promoters’ private conversation in the remainder of the scene. Thus Middleton gently guides the audience to “side” with Allwit against the smug, hypocritical Promoters.

Allwit draws the Promoters’ full attention by taunting them into thinking that, because of his desire for veal with greensauce, he is breaking the laws they seek to enforce.³³ In an aside, they eagerly compare him to a “green,” or young, goose and declare “you shall be sauced”

(2.2.81). But he declares triumphantly, “I’ll buy, walk by your noses with my flesh, sheep-biting mongrels, handbasket freebooters! My wife lies in” (98-100). Mrs. Allwit’s recent birth has exempted his family from the jurisdiction of the Promoters. His comparison of the two men to hungry (sheep-biting) stray dogs demonstrates his feeling of entitlement to purchase and consume meat, his success at evading the system, and his frustration with the corrupt practices of the Promoters.

The Wench, who has recently given birth to an illegitimate child fathered by Touchwood Sr., participates in an extra-domestic food transaction in order to rid herself of evidence that marks her as a sexually dishonest woman.³⁴ She fools the Promoters by packing the child at the bottom of a basket of meat (purchased with the money Touchwood begrudgingly gave her) and covering the basket only partially. She then argues that the meat she carries was ordered by a doctor for “a wealthy gentlewoman that takes physic” (147), knowing full well that the Promoters won’t accept such an excuse from someone who hasn’t lined their pockets. When the Promoters confiscate and unpack her basket, they find a large quantity of meat: “a good fat loin of mutton,” the fairly common, strongly flavored meat of an adult (three- to five-year old) sheep;³⁵ “a quarter of lamb,” the more tender, fatty meat of a younger sheep, and “a shoulder of mutton” (160-62). While struggling to handle the large pieces of meat in their arms, the characters note that the basket is still heavy and begin to guess at what it might contain:

SECOND PROMOTER. Some loin of veal?

FIRST PROMOTER. No, faith, here’s a lamb’s head; I feel that plainly. (164-166)

The Promoters become more ambitious with their expectations for the remaining meat, first hoping for veal, the flesh of a young cow, which was appreciated in England as early as the

fifteenth century.³⁶ When the first Promoter feels the “meat” with his hand, though, he declares it to be a lamb’s head, a considerably more rare delicacy that may have been cooked and used as the adorned centerpiece for a feast.³⁷

SECOND PROMOTER. Ha?

FIRST PROMOTER. ’Swounds, what’s here?

SECOND PROMOTER. A child!

FIRST PROMOTER. A pox of all dissembling cunning whores!

SECOND PROMOTER. Here’s an unlucky breakfast! (2.3.167-69)³⁸

This scene would have been particularly visceral and striking on stage as the Promoters balanced three large pieces of possibly bloody meat, a large basket, and a baby that had been residing at the bottom of the meat basket for at least a number of minutes. It is unclear whether the stage props would have been actual meat or items designed to look like meat. Philip Henslowe does not list any food items in the props lists of his diary, with a few exceptions for things like “tree of gowlden apelles” and a variety of animal heads (boar, bull, and lion).³⁹ He does list many very small hand props, such as “fanies of feathers” and small dishes as well as many small clothing items, so it is unlikely size or insignificance that keeps food props from being listed. Additionally, Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson seem to assume that the meat props of early modern English drama were actual meat, though they do not explain this assumption or address the issue directly.⁴⁰ I acknowledge the possibility that real food items may have been used on the stage; the absence of “fake” food items in the props lists does seem to contribute at least some meaningful evidence for this.

Whether or not the actors are balancing real meat in addition to the doll that represented the abandoned baby, the Promoters stumble over their assumption that the object in the basket is

consumable with their “unlucky breakfast” metaphor. As they begin to understand that they have been tricked, their attention quickly turns to the child’s bodily needs, the cost inherent in providing them, and the Promoters’ reluctance to do so:

SECOND PROMOTER. Villanous strange!

Life, had she none to gull but poor promoters

That watch hard for a living?

FIRST PROMOTER. Half our gettings must run in sugar-sops

And nurses’ wages now, besides many a pound of soap

And tallow; we have need to get loins of mutton still,

To save suet to change for candles.

SECOND PROMOTER. Nothing mads me but this was a lamb’s head with you;

You felt it! She has made calves’ heads of us. (2.3.171-79)

Culinarily, calves heads were considerably less sought after than lambs’ heads and were primarily used either as the basis for head cheese (a jellied concoction made by boiling the head until the meat fell off) or mock turtle soup (a popular Scottish dish).⁴¹

A powerful food metaphor dominates this scene. The Wench represents “mutton,” a slang word for prostitute. The Promoters’ misinterpretation of the downy head in the basket metaphorically connects the child, or “lamb,” to his mother, who is, by now, free of her burden. The second Promoter expresses outrage that the woman has made “calves’ heads” out of them by tricking them, transferring her metaphorical lamb – the evidence of her status as mutton – to the Promoters. In doing so, the Wench has transferred her own status as meat onto the Promoters; thus the second Promoter’s acknowledgement completes the Wench’s plot.

In this scene, Middleton captures his audience's attention with the dynamics of food control. The scene depicts a woman of small means and little power using her shrewdness in an extra-domestic food transaction to advance her own position and thwart the corrupt system of the Promoters. The woman, to the audience's delight, escapes without consequence, while the loathed Promoters learn a lesson about the yields of their greed. The scene reveals the Promoters' actual regulatory power but then encourages audience members to celebrate the subversion of that power.

Back at his home with the meat he has legally obtained for his wife, Allwit disgustedly watches the Puritans and gossips celebrate Mrs. Allwit's daughter's christening, criticizing them for pulling out their handkerchiefs too quickly with "long fingers that are washed / some thrice a day in urine" and characterizing their eagerness as greed: "Now we shall have such pocketing!" (3.2.53-55). He continues,

A pox! It seems your purity loves sweet
 things well, that puts in thrice together.
 Had this been all my cost, now, I had been beggared;
 These women have no consciences at sweetmeats,
 Where'er they come; see an they have not culled out
 All the long plums too, they have left nothing here
 But short wriggle-tail comfits, not worth mouthing.
 No mar'l I heard a citizen complain once
 That his wife's belly only broke his back. (3.2.59-67)

Allwit marvels at the women's lack of inhibition with the costly sweet foods set out for the christening banquet, noting a woman who has placed three sweets in her mouth at one time and

becoming upset that others have picked all of the sugar plums, or candied plums,⁴² out of another dish (possibly plum pudding). A comfit consisted of a seed (usually caraway) or a nut covered in multiple coats of sugar syrup.⁴³ When Allwit becomes upset that the women have left only the “short wriggle-tail” comfits, he expresses dissatisfaction that the more choice sweets, along with the longest, plumpest comfits, have all been eaten, leaving only short seeds with wriggle-tails that did not receive a full coating of sugar. He goes on to reflect that his back might have been in pieces “seven years since” had not Sir Walter “upheld” his wife and estate (68-71).

The intact condition of his back does not stop him from continuing to disparage the women’s appetites for a while before leaving, however: “Now the cups troll about to wet the gossips’ whistles. It pours down, I’faith; they never think of payment . . . Now bless thee, two at once! I’ll stay no longer; it would kill me an if I paid for it” (3.2.79-83). Allwit seems perversely compelled to imagine the thought of bearing the financial burden of the women’s appetites. Tim, after Lady Kix and the Second Gossip kiss him against his will, concurs with Allwit’s disgust: “This is intolerable! This woman has a villainous sweet breath, did she not stink of comfits. Help me, sweet tutor, or I shall rub my lips off” (3.2.164-66). Allwit’s robust agitation forces him to yell after the women as they leave: “You had more need to sleep than eat; / Go take a nap with some of the brethren, go, / And rise up a well edified, boldified sister! . . . How hot they have made the room with their thick bums!” (3.2.188-93). Allwit’s discomfort with the gossips’ appetites and “pocketing” expresses his anxiety at their consumption and assumed ownership of the food provided for the christening celebration. Allwit also expresses his apprehension about food costs, even though he admittedly does not bear those costs. His comments do more to demonstrate his obsessive stinginess and align him with Tim, the play’s fool, than they do to

censure the appetites of the gossips, who rule this domestic food transaction by default with their obliviousness to Allwit's anxiety.

Each of these scenes deals with a kind of property "conversion," the point at which an object changes physically and/or legally into the property of another.⁴⁴ In the Promoters' scene, the ownership of the meat (and the baby) shifts from the Wench to the Promoters. The Promoters believe they are in control of the food, but the Wench has orchestrated the entire transaction for her own benefit. In the christening scene, ownership shifts from Whorehound, who maintains Allwit's household in exchange for sex with Allwit's wife, to the gossips. However, the control of the food belongs publicly to Allwit, who worries about its rapid disappearance. In both of these situations, women maneuver the available food.

The play's concern with women's involvement in the two scenes that entail the physical presence of food on the stage illuminates the metaphorical treatment of women as food in the rest of the play. The anxiety-producing necessity of women's participation in food transactions solicits an ideological collapse of the women with the food they handle so adeptly. In other words, the women's competence at manipulating food transactions becomes more bearable when the women themselves are characterized also as commodities in that food economy. If women are, by nature, like food, then their ability to maneuver food can be superior to what might otherwise be expected. However, this ability is still dangerous since it can be used for their own, non-patriarchal advantage as well as for the greater good, evoking a cultural anxiety surrounding the issue of women in the marketplace. This anxiety explains the celebration of the Wench's resourcefulness, the obsession with the gossips' ravenousness, and the rest of the play's propensity to characterize the women as food.

Food in *Bartholomew Fair*

Performed in 1614, one year after *Chaste Maid*, *Bartholomew Fair* deals with similar issues of ownership, control, and consumption.⁴⁵ Like the Cheapside district, Bartholomew Fair was a major site of food exchange. *Bartholomew Fair* involves female characters with differing amounts of power in a series of extra-domestic food transactions. The setting of the fair amplifies both disdain for the female appetite and anxiety about the food economy (especially dishonest merchants). As we have seen, early modern conduct manuals emphasized the importance of a woman's well-controlled appetite and exhorted her to remain indoors and away from the market whenever possible.⁴⁶ As Erickson points out, though, this prohibition was impossible to fulfill while properly administering a household, as a good housewife's duty involved both buying and selling at the market, something women were expected to do skillfully.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the conduct manuals treated women's position in the social hierarchy "entirely in terms of marriage," ignoring the fact that the majority of early modern Englishwomen – like many of the female characters in *Bartholomew Fair* – were *not*, in fact, married.⁴⁸

In addition to its anxiety about women's participation in food transactions, *Bartholomew Fair* depicts considerable anxiety about dishonesty in commercial food transactions. Justice Overdo expresses his admiration for a Lord Mayor of London who would, in disguise, visit "every alehouse and down to every cellar" himself in order to "measure the length of puddings; take the gauge of black pots and cans, ay, and custards, with a stick, and their circumference with a thread; weigh the loaves of bread on his middle finger" (2.1.17-22). This practice emphasizes the uncontrollability of mercantile food transactions and acknowledges the perceived instability of the expanding market during this period. Consumers worried about the availability of food and suspected merchants of failing to meet regulations and measure their foods honestly. The

fair, which is away from home and filled with transient merchants and professional swindlers, naturally amplifies these anxieties.⁴⁹

Bartholomew Fair deals extensively with the viscosity of food – its relationship to the body and its propensity to elicit strong reactions. The play highlights the consumable nature of food, its privileged place in the hierarchy of needs, and its hedonistic possibilities. Like *Chaste Maid*, *Bartholomew Fair* attempts to describe many of its female characters in terms of food. Winwife's description of Win in Act 1, Scene 2 focuses on her features as edible fruits, conflating female desirability with consumability: "a wife here with a strawberry breath, cherry lips, apricot cheeks, and a soft velvet head like a melocoton" (13-15). Winwife kisses her against her will, but with her husband's permission, as though he offers her, hospitably, as a refreshment to his guest. In this transaction as well as the play as a whole, the depiction of women as consumable functions as an acknowledgment of their sexual desirability.

The premise of the primary plot is that a group of Londoners travel to the fair to partake of roasted pig's flesh, for which Win, who is pregnant, supposedly longs. However, the original desire for Bartholomew pig belongs not to Win but to her husband John Littlewit, who uses his wife's compliant appetite because he longs to eat roasted pig's flesh and see the performance of a play he has written: "Win, long to eat of a pig, sweet Win, I'the fair; do you see? I'the heart o'the fair, not at Pie Corner. Your mother will do anything, Win, to satisfy your longing, you know" (1.5.152-54). Win's mother, Dame Purecraft, is initially horrified by Win's asserted craving for pig, however:

PURECRAFT. Look up, sweet Win-the-fight, and suffer not the enemy to enter
you at this door! Remember that your education has been with the purest. What
polluted one was it that named first the unclean beast, pig, to you child?

WIN. Uh, uh! [...]

PURECRAFT. Oh resist it, Win-the-fight! It is the tempter, the wicked tempter!

You may know it by the fleshly motion of pig. Be strong against it and its foul temptations in these assaults, whereby it broacheth flesh and blood, as it were, on the weaker side and pray against its carnal provocations, good child. Sweet child, pray! (1.6.5-19)

Dame Purecraft objects to the consumption of pig as “unclean” and denounces the food’s “foul temptations” and “carnal provocations.” Pork was looked upon with some suspicion in early modern dietaries, but in general experts believed it to be appropriate for many people, especially the young, to consume.⁵⁰ Dame Purecraft professes her commitment to a vague Puritan ideal of sparseness in meals, then, and calls Busy for support.

Jonson presents Busy, the play’s most voracious male character, as rife with hypocrisy and gluttony. Littlewit describes Busy as “a suitor that puts in here at meal-tide” (1.2.64); he continues, “Sometime the spirit is so strong with him, it gets quite out of him, and then my mother, or Win, are fain to fetch it again with malmsey or *aqua coelestis*” (67-69).⁵¹ Busy, then, shows up for meals and uses his station to importune free meals, wine, and spirits. Quarlous suggests that Busy has a history of dishonesty in mercantile food dealings, swindling a grocer in his past as a baker: “He has undone a grocer here, in Newgate Market, that broked with him, trusted him with currants, as arrant a zeal as he; that’s by the way” (1.3.138-141). But Busy’s greed for free meals and excessive consumption of wine and liquor characterize him above all other attributes. Of Busy’s bodily size, Win adds, “Yes, indeed, we have such a tedious life with him for his diet – and his clothes too. He breaks his buttons and cracks seams at every saying he sobs out” (1.2.70-72). When Dame Purecraft wonders when Busy will arrive to assist after Win

faints with feigned longing, Littlewit answers that he is cleaning out his beard: “I found him, fast by the teeth i’the cold turkey pie, i’the cupboard, with a great white loaf on his left hand and a glass of malmsey on his right” (1.6.35-38). This image of a man with his face literally pressed into a leftover meat pie, with bread and wine occupying his hands and chunks of turkey in his beard, is one of the play’s most vivid examples of food imagery and one that nudges the reader to critically question Busy’s integrity in matters of dietary principles.

After cleaning himself and joining Purecraft at Win’s side, Busy initially uses his authority to reject the idea of traveling to Bartholomew Fair to eat pig, suggesting that Win fulfill her craving in town: “It may be eaten, very exceeding well eaten. But in the fair, and as a Barthol’ mew-pig, it cannot be eaten; for the very calling it a Barthol’ mew-pig, and to eat it so, is a spice of idolatry, and you make the fair no better than one of the high places” (1.6.54-58). Busy provides a telling insistence that “Barthol’ mew-pig” is somehow different from the pig that was regularly available in London. The place – or merchant – from which (or whom) the pig is obtained matters greatly to Busy, who feels more comfortable and safe allowing Win to eat London pig. However, Win has claimed to long specifically for the pig available only at the fair, and Busy apparently cannot refute such an assertion. Upon reflection, Busy decides that he will accompany them and convinces Purecraft that going to the fair is an appropriate Puritan activity.⁵² In a matter of minutes, Win Littlewit has overcome Busy’s authority and her mother’s apparent devoutness and assured the attendance of the entire family at the fair.

That Purecraft and Busy acquiesce in order to satisfy Win’s professed appetite demonstrates the power of Win Littlewit’s bodily appetite to trump Busy’s authority on the spiritual appropriateness of the outing.⁵³ Immediately upon her arrival at the fair, Whit provides a description ambiguously conflating Win’s body with the pig being sold by Ursula: “A delicate

show-pig, little mistress, with shweet sauce, and crackling like de bay leaf I'de fire, la! Tou shalt ha' de clean side o'de tablecloth" (3.2.65-68). While overtly he is trying to sell Ursula's pig, his description obscures Win's position in relation to the sauce and the tablecloth, suggesting that she is fit to be served *as* the meal. Again, as in Act 1, Win's public presence is re-characterized as food, blurring the boundaries between woman as consumer and woman as consumed.

The fair bustles with prostitutes, pigs, and poultry, three types of flesh available for ready consumption. Knockem attempts to entice Quarlous to purchase both a meal and a prostitute when he arrives at Ursula's booth: "This is old Ursula's mansion. How like you her bower? Here you may ha' your punk and your pig in state, sir, both piping hot" (2.5.40-41); and Whit offers to guide Winwife to a prostitute in the pig-quarter for twelvence: "I vill help tee to her, here, be an't be, in te pig-quarter" (3.2.13-14). Ursula refers to the prostitute shortage as an inability to satisfy customers who are hungry for fowl-meat: "We are undone for want of fowl i'the fair, here. Here will be Zekiel Edgeworth and three or four gallants with him at night, and I ha' neither plover nor quail for 'em. Persuade this, between you two, to become a bird o'the game" (4.5.14-17).⁵⁴ Zekiel is expected to bring in three or four men who would like to hire prostitutes. Ursula is short on prostitutes to sell, but she has her eye on Win.

From Act 1, Win progresses from fruit to roasted pig as she submits to Winwife's unwanted sexual advances and her husband's (and advisor's) appetites. Win represents different forms of food as she ventures deeper into the public sphere and mercantile food economy. When she agrees to be dressed like a prostitute, Knockem and Whit overtly market her flesh as "fowl" for their profit. When Justice Overdo reveals himself, Knockem attempts to escape the scene with his newly acquired property: "Best fall off with our birds, for fear o'the cage" (5.6.10-11).

Like the women in *Chaste Maid*, Win readily becomes both consumer and consumable; here, a showcase of her consumability reconciles the sexual market's demand for her body.

In stark contrast to Win Littlewit, most of the play's characters abhor Ursula as grotesque; additionally, she seems exempt from the embarrassment that the other women express over their bodily functions.⁵⁵ Ursula manages to evade characterization as consumable property. She unashamedly admits to being "all fire and fat" and worries that she "shall e'en melt away to the first woman, a rib" (2.1.52-53). She then scolds Mooncalf for failing to enlarge her chair to accommodate her hips: "Did I not bid you should get this chair let out o'the sides for me, that my hips might play?" (2.1.52-53, 66-68). She freely acknowledges her body size. Her insistence that the small chair does not give her hips sufficient room to "play" does not affect her appetite for ale, as she immediately demands a refill of the bottle she began drinking in line 73: "Fill again, you unlucky vermin" (78).⁵⁶ Ursula's very trade was considered distasteful: the nuisance and filth created by London's "pig problem" contributed one of the most common offences recorded in court records during the seventeenth century.⁵⁷

In addition, Ursula profits directly from the commercial arrangement in which flesh (meat, sex) and ale are sold. She maintains a position of leadership and power at the fair, runs her booth and sets unfair prices based on her whims, and serves as the central meeting place for the fair's vagrants and visitors. Additionally, she makes no pretense of being an honest merchant, nor does she offer an apology for being dishonest. She coaches her terrified employee, Mooncalf, to pad her profits for her beer and bottle ale: "I ha' told you the ways how to raise it: froth your cans well i'the filling, at length, rouge, and jog your bottles o' the buttock, sirrah, then skink out the first glass, ever and drink with all companies, though you be sure to be drunk; you'll misreckon the better and be less ashamed on't" (2.2.97-104). She then outlines her variable

pricing structure for roast pig: “Five shillings a pig is my price, at least; if it be a sow-pig, sixpence more; if she be a great-bellied wife, and long for’t, sixpence more for that” (2.2.113-115). Ursula charges a standard price of five shillings per pig; for pigs that have had a litter of piglets, she charges sixpence more; and if the *customer* is pregnant and has a longing for pig’s flesh, she charges yet an additional sixpence. Ursula’s commercial domain exists outside of the conventional patriarchal power structures that attempt to regulate the play’s other women; in her booth, Ursula reigns supreme.

Where Win Littlewit is repeatedly characterized as food, Knockem struggles to neatly categorize Ursula as such. He acknowledges her as animal-like, endearingly referring to her as “my little, lean Ursula, my she-bear” (2.3.1, playing on the meaning of her name). Later in the scene, he threatens her by comparing her to a horse: “I’ll ha’ this belly o’thine taken up and thy grass scoured, Wench” (2.3.58-59). Unlike fruits, pigs, and poultry, though, neither horses nor bears were eaten in England except as a very last resort in times of dire scarcity.⁵⁸ Ursula’s characterization thus repeatedly resists comparison to food. This resistance continues when Quarlous and Winwife join Knockem’s taunts and the three of them verbally abuse her quite brutally:

QUARLOUS. Body o’the fair! What’s this? Mother o’the bawds?

KNOCKEM. No, she’s mother o’the pigs, sir, mother o’ the pigs.

WINWIFE. Mother o’the Furies, I think, by her firebrand.

QUARLOUS. Nay, she is too fat to be a Fury; sure some walking sow of tallow.

She drinks this while.

WINWIFE. An inspired vessel of kitchen-stuff!

QUARLOUS: She’ll make excellent gear for the coach-makers, here in

Smitheirld, to anoint wheels and axletrees with. (2.5.72-79)

In these taunts, Quarlous and Winwife initially compare Ursula to a she-bear, a horse, a bawd, a pig, a fury, and a sow. They end by comparing her to a vat of kitchen grease, and then simply to grease fit for use by the coach-makers. But none of these comparisons succeeds in affecting Ursula's behavior; note the placid stage direction above: "*She drinks this while.*" The men's rapid progression from inedible being (bear, horse, bawd) to edible animal (pig) to mythological scourge (fury) to edible material (kitchen grease) before settling on a related-but-inedible material (wagon lubricant grease) indicates their inability to satisfactorily compare Ursula to something fit for their own consumption.⁵⁹ Ursula does not fit the play's model of a consumable, sexually desirable woman.

Perhaps more infuriating for them, though, is that Ursula seems to reject the desirability that would shame her into seeking their approval. She responds quite as brutally, defending her own size and corpulent body composition while mocking the men's preference for thinness: "Ay, ay, gamesters, mock a plain plump soft wench o'the suburbs, do, because she's *juicy and wholesome*. You must ha' your thin pinched ware, pent up i'the compass of a dog collar, or 'twill not do, that looks like a long laced conger set upright, and a green feather, like fennel, i'the jowl on't" (2.5.81-85, emphasis added). A conger eel is a large, "voracious," grey-brown fish that lives in the Atlantic ocean and ventures from rocky crevices to feed at night. It has a reputation for attacking swimmers who are unlucky enough to disturb it during the day, and is considered the biggest and most ferocious fish a bather is likely to encounter. Conger⁶⁰ was a commonly consumed food in England and Wales; the tail was reserved for soup and the middle was poached, braised, or roasted.⁶¹ Fennel was widely available and commonly served with fish;⁶² its green color evokes the clothing used to distinguish prostitutes at the fair. Ursula's description

produces both a ridiculous image of a sea-eel dressed like a prostitute and a more commonplace image of a seafood meal “dressed” with fennel. Either way, it represents an unpleasant contrast to Ursula’s own self-identity and presentation: a sallow, ridiculously dressed fish-prostitute in contrast to a “juicy and wholesome” Ursula.

Quarlous’s retort explicitly criticizes Ursula’s unattractiveness sexually – he argues that the man who would venture to have sex with her “might sink into her and be drowned a week ere any friend he had could find where he were” (2.5.93-94).⁶³ His description is significant because instead of successfully consuming Ursula’s flesh, the brave man unwittingly becomes the devoured; he disappears into Ursula’s monstrous body and becomes a part of it “like falling into a whole shire of butter” (97).⁶⁴ Where the plays easily compare the other women with food in order to allay anxiety about women’s increasing roles in food economies, Ursula’s mastery of the market and refusal to enact the shamefulness projected onto her body exacerbate that anxiety.

Because of her bulging flesh, Ursula represents “an emblem of excess and immorality”⁶⁵ to the play’s other characters. In a lecture to Knockem, Busy warns that “the fleshly woman which you call Ursula is above all to be avoided, having the marks upon her of the three enemies of man: the world, as being in the fair; the devil, as being in the fire; and the flesh, as being herself” (3.6.32-35).⁶⁶ Women’s reproductive capacity was viewed as opposite to the male mind, spirit, or rational capacity. Maurizio Calbi points out that in the early modern sex-gender system, “women do not simply *have* a body. They *are* the body ... the female body always-already bears the mark of monstrosity.”⁶⁷ If women are their bodies, Ursula is larger and more unapologetically, monstrously female than the play’s other women. When Justice Overdo exclaims of Ursula, “Oh, the sow of *enormity*, this!” (5.6.61-62, emphasis added), he describes her dangerousness with the word he has used to describe all of the fair’s transgressions.

When Quarlous and Winwife overturn Ursula's scalding pan on her legs in their physical fight, their antics can be read as an unsuccessful attempt to cook her. Upon hearing her cries, Joan Trash, Mooncalf, Knockem, Nightingale, Edgeworth, and even Justice Overdo rush immediately to Ursula's aid. Knockem, who had, for a time, participated in Quarlous and Winwife's taunts, comforts her: "Patience, Urs. Take a good heart; 'tis but a blister as big as a windgall. I'll take it away with the white of an egg, a little honey, and hog's grease, ha' thy pasterns well rolled, and thou shalt pace again by tomorrow. I'll tend thy booth and look to thy affairs the while. Thou shalt sit i'thy chair, and give directions, and shine Ursa Major" (2.5.182-87).⁶⁸ The other characters bustle around her, tending to her needs, gathering ingredients and preparing a salve for her wound, taking over the function of her booth, and fantasizing about avenging her tormenters by cutting their purses. This scene reveals Ursula's impressive power within the social structure of the fair.

As we have seen, the depiction of women as consumable in *Bartholomew Fair* necessitates an acknowledgment of their sexual desirability. In acquiescing to her husband and Knockem, Win metaphorically and then very literally allows her flesh to be put to sale. However, Win and her mother Dame Purecraft exert most of the control over the food situations in the early scenes. As the host, Purecraft is the owner of the food and pantry in which Busy is exercising his gluttony. The food conversion takes place between Purecraft's property and Busy's corpulent body. Jonson's depiction of Busy as a glutton and a hypocrite, taking advantage of the widow's hospitality, is unflattering at best.⁶⁹ As the pregnant woman who "longs" (or pretends to), Win represents the reason that the group needs to travel to the fair. Win's characterization as food throughout the play tempers the power she is capable of exerting in the market by recasting her as a natural part of the food economy in which she partakes. Ursula, by

contrast, embraces her own *undesirability*, escaping this characterization. She enjoys mercantile success as customers and fellow merchants pack into her booth to exalt her roast pig and ale. In these food transactions, Ursula transfers ownership but maintains control. Haslem argues that any triumph of the female grotesque that Jonson accomplishes with Ursula is negated by the depiction of the other women's "several bodily purgations as gestures of shame rather than triumph."⁷⁰ Though Ursula's success and power are certainly not celebrated, her acceptance of her own "enormity" and her willingness to be sexually undesirable, though not free of social repercussions, expose a crack in the patriarchal power structure, revealing space for women who were willing to make that sacrifice to access power. Ursula, with her unacceptable body and lack of shame, has discovered and occupied this space.

Chaste Maid habitually refers to its female characters as consumable food while acknowledging and even celebrating the emergence of women into the world of food exchange. *Bartholomew Fair* similarly conflates women and food but struggles with how to characterize Ursula, who has achieved considerable power in the food-market economy. Both plays end with a return from the extra-domestic transactions of the market to the safer domestic transactions of hospitality with plans for large, communal meals. Yellowhammer invites the group who just witnessed Moll's marriage to Touchwood Jr. to a celebratory feast in honor of both of his children's nuptials: "One feast will serve them both! Marry, for room, / I'll have the dinner kept in Goldsmiths' Hall, / To which, kind gallants, I invite you all. (*Chaste Maid* 5.4.120-22). Justice Overdo concludes his speech – cut short by the drunken illness of his wife – with a similar summons: "I invite you home with me to my house, to supper. I will have none fear to go along" (*Bartholomew Fair* 5.6.118-119). The preoccupation with food and eating in these plays reveals

the importance of the early modern consumer's daily interaction with food as well as the significance of food ownership, control, and consumption.

In these plays, food is more than just a backdrop or an ideology: it is a visceral preoccupation that informs a complete understanding of early modern attitudes toward shifting social roles in the ever-evolving and expanding food economy. The plays demonstrate an awareness of this preoccupation, reflecting and contributing to radical ideas about the roles of women in the new economy. The cultural desire to stabilize and regulate women's participation and power within the developing model of commercialism explains why both of these plays anxiously grapple with ideas of women as food. The food transactions in these plays reveal the delicate balance in food dealings that most women would have navigated out of necessity, honing their skills without emphasizing either the public nature or the power component of their participation in food economies. With the rich use of food in these plays, Middleton and Jonson magnify the cultural anxiety surrounding women's participation in food economies and highlight the potential for power connected to the deceptively simple acts of exchanging food. Acknowledging the significance with which food and food transactions would have been perceived by these plays' original audiences reveals the narrow spaces that women could use to destabilize, and even subvert, the new economy's emerging patterns of power and ownership.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ Unless otherwise noted, references to *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* are from Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, Eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 907-962.

² Unless otherwise noted, references to *Bartholomew Fair* are from Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 961-1065.

³ These examples suggest the strain that hospitality and the provision of food may have placed on the individuals extending it while putting the recipients of such hospitality in a fairly negative light (they are depicted as greedy, ridiculous, and somewhat grotesque for their gain in both cases). Also, in both cases, the host criticizes the body size of the recipients ("thick bums" on the gossips and popping buttons on Busy), suggesting that some guests were perceived as pushing the limits of hospitality because of their size.

⁴ David Bevington, introduction, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, by Thomas Middleton (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 1453-57.

⁵ Richard Levin, "The Four Plots of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*," *The Review of English Studies* 16.61 (Feb. 1965): 24.

⁶ Richard Levin, "The Structure of *Bartholomew Fair*," *PMLA* 80.3 (June 1965): 172-79. For example, he refers to Ursula's booth simply as the "pig-booth" and treats it as a backdrop for the interactions of the visitors.

⁷ See Lori Schroeder Haslem, "'Troubled with the Mother': Longings, Purgings, and the Maternal Body in 'Bartholomew Fair' and 'The Duchess of Malfi,'" *Modern Philology* 92.4

(1995): 438-459; Elena Levy-Navarro, *The Culture of Obesity in Early and Late Modernity: Body Image in Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Skelton* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Shannon Miller, "Consuming Mothers/Consuming Merchants: The Carnavalesque Economy of Jacobean City Comedy," *Modern Language Studies* 26.3 (Spring-Summer 1996): 73-97; and Gail Kern Paster, "Bartholomew Fair and the Humoral Body," *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁸ See Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 1-31.

⁹ Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

¹⁰ Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (London: Continuum, 2007), 59.

¹¹ Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 64.

¹² Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 60-61.

¹³ F. J. Fisher, "The Development of the London Food Market, 1540-1640," *The Economic History Review* 5.2 (April 1935): 47.

¹⁴ Fisher, "The Development of the London Food Market," 52.

¹⁵ Fisher, "The Development of the London Food Market," 57-58.

¹⁶ Fisher, "The Development of the London Food Market," 64.

¹⁷ Alan Everitt, "The Marketing of Agricultural Produce," *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. IV 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 565.

¹⁸ Gervase Markham, *Covntrey Contentments, OR The English Husvwife. CONTAINING The inward and outward Vertues which ought to be in a compleate Woman* (London, 1623), 4. From the Library of Dr. and Mrs. John Talbot Gernon, The Lilly Library, Indiana University.

Markham's handbook enjoyed frequent printings from its original publication in 1615. It was then reprinted with other works into Markham's larger volume, *A Way to Get Wealth*, beginning in 1623, so its audience seems to have been wide and varied. The work praises household efficiency and suggests relying principally on items and ingredients obtainable from the land immediately surrounding the household. Markham idealizes a country lifestyle, which may not have been possible for many of the book's readers judging by its popularity.

¹⁹ Miller, "Consuming Mothers/Consuming Merchants," 77.

²⁰ David Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England," *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 136. Underdown observes that "[t]he preoccupation with scolding women during the century 1560-1660 can therefore be seen as a by-product of the social and economic transformation that was occurring in England during that period – of the decline in the habits of good neighborhood and social harmony that accompanied the spread of capitalism" (126).

²¹ Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies*, 36-37.

²² Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), 10-11.

²³ Frumentye was a dish made with hulled, boiled wheat: "frumenty, furnety, 1." *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

²⁴ John Norden, *Speculi Britanniae pars: an historical and chorographical description of the County of Essex, 1594*, ed. Sir Henry Ellis (Camden Society, 1840), xii.

²⁵ Miller argues that “[p]eople feared a radically shifting economy in seventeenth-century England for many of the same reasons that they feared an opened female body: the uncontrollable traits of the economic body and the female body appeared carnivalesque in their uncontained form” (“Consuming Mothers/Consuming Merchants,” 74).

²⁶ David Bevington, Introduction, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, by Thomas Middleton, *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 1453.

²⁷ Karen Newman, “*A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and London,” *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 237.

²⁸ Laura Gowing, in *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in 17th-Century England* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 2003) examines the cultural practices that “problematised such women’s sexual consent, desire, and agency” (83). Legal accounts of illicit sex tended to address only issues of paternity and not the incidents of rape that frequently caused them: “[t]he erasure of female consent was supported by a culture which equated men’s love and desire with coercion and violence, and which systematically undermined women’s sexual agency” (99).

²⁹ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 600-601.

³⁰ The second promoter crossly curses a man from whom he has just confiscated a basket of veal because he “promised faithfully to send this morning a fat quarter of lamb to a kind gentlewoman in Turnbull Street that longs” (127-29). Oliver, who has bribed the promoters for the duration of

the Lenten Season, pointedly and ridiculously suggests that he is carrying a huge quantity of meat in order to meet his wife's health needs: "A rack of mutton, sir, and half a lamb. You know my mistress's diet" (139-140).

³¹ Alan Davidson and Tom Jaine, eds., "sweetbreads," *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 774.

³² A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia, "Hormonal Effects in Newborns," Atlanta (GA): 2009.
<<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001911.htm>>

³³ According to Davidson and Jaine, greensauce was a complex mixture of green herbs ("greensauce," 354).

³⁴ See note 28.

³⁵ Davidson and Jaine, "mutton," 528.

³⁶ Davidson and Jaine, "veal," 824.

³⁷ Davidson and Jaine, "head," 376.

³⁸ This scene evokes images of the Wakefield Second Shepherd's Play.

³⁹ R.A. Foakes, Ed, *Henslowe's Diary*, Second Edition (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 320.

⁴⁰ Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 142.

⁴¹ Davidson and Jaine, "head," 376.

⁴² Davidson and Jaine, "plum," 614.

⁴³ Davidson and Jaine, "comfit," 207.

⁴⁴ This necessarily involves some distinction between scenes of hospitality and scenes of mercantilism, since the conversion of the food is considerably different depending on how it changes hands.

⁴⁵ Though *Bartholomew Fair* was not performed until 1614, the year after the 1607-1613 famine, I assume that the seven years of food shortage that preceded its performance (and probably coincided with Jonson's composition) affected the attitudes toward food that it depicts.

⁴⁶ See note 18.

⁴⁷ Erickson, *Women and Property*, 9-11.

⁴⁸ Erickson, *Women and Property*, 8-9.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Haynes, in "Festivity and the Dramatic Economy of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*," *ELH* 51.4 (Winter 1984): 645-668, argues that Jonson's play is a moral criticism of what *Bartholomew Fair* has become. He suggests that Jonson's description of festivity in *Bartholomew Fair* is distinct from Bakhtin's notion of the carnival in Europe and in Rabelais; where Bakhtin's festive marketplace suspends hierarchical rank, Jonson pinpoints the process of "social Darwinism" to reestablish rank inside the fair (656). Anne Lake Prescott, in "Jonson's Rabelais," *New Perspectives on Ben Jonson*, ed. James Hirsh (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), 35-54, argues that although Jonson is very unlike Rabelais in that Jonson "does not quite celebrate the lower body," he does appreciate Rabelais's ability to satirize intellectual pretension.

⁵⁰ See Andrew Wear, "Making Sense of health and the environment in early modern England," *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays*, ed. Wear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 145-146 for a discussion on the supposed healthfulness of pig. Wear presents evidence

that pig was believed to be especially nourishing when the animal was given “fresh air, fresh food and freedom to move” (146).

⁵¹ Malmsey is a type of wine; *aqua coelestis* is a type of spirit.

⁵² Busy ruminates on his intentions in an aside: “I will therefore eat; yea, I will eat exceedingly” (1.6.98-99), justifying his appetite by suggesting that the public consumption of swine’s flesh will demonstrate his “hate and loathing of Judaism” (97). Indeed, once Busy has satisfied himself at the fair, Knockem marvels at his appetite: “I’ll in and joy Ursula with telling how her pig works; two and a half he eat to his share! And he has drunk a pailful. He eats with his eyes, as well as his teeth” (3.6.46-48).

⁵³ In Act 3, when Littlewit has had enough roasted pig, he implores his wife, “Good Win, sweet Win, long to see some hobbyhorses, and some drums, and rattles, and dogs, and fine devices, Win ... Now you ha’ begun with pig, you may long for anything, Win, and so for my motion, Win” (3.6.5-9).

⁵⁴ Interestingly, the term “poultry,” originally used to refer to a market for fowl, came from the site of such a market (and now simply a street) on the east side of Cheapside: “poultry, n.1a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

⁵⁵ In *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), Gail Kern Paster examines the role of early modern bodies in these same plays by interrogating the way subjects policed their excretions. She scrutinizes the humoral body through issues of embarrassment and the use of shame for social control, arguing for “the place of physiological theory in the social history of the body” (3). She

addresses the belief that women were unable to control their humors and examines the ways in which men took it upon themselves to regulate and judge them. She produces an analysis of *Chaste Maid*, arguing that “[w]hat is at stake here is a semiology of excretion in which an ostensibly natural behavior becomes thoroughly implicated in a complex structure of class and gender differences” (34-35). Where Paster is concerned with the gendered body’s excretions, I wish to study the gendered body through the depiction of *consumption*.

⁵⁶ Levy-Navarro (*The Culture of Obesity*) argues that “Ursula’s remarks make no sense to those who, like Mistress Overdo and Win, will insist on hiding their bodies and their bodily processes, nor do they make any sense to their male counterparts who are invested in having women conform to their thin regime” (*The Culture of Obesity in Early and Late Modernity*, 181).

⁵⁷ Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise, and Stench in England, 1600-1770* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 193. Without refrigeration, pig vendors had to keep live pigs nearby in order to have new meat to cook.

⁵⁸ Davidson and Jaine, “bear,” 66; “horsemeat,” 387.

⁵⁹ Later, Alice mocks Ursula’s size and even compares her to a chamber pot: “you rid that week and broke out the bottom o’ the cart, night-tub” (4.5.78-79).

⁶⁰ Doll Tearsheet hurls the term “muddy conger” at Falstaff as an insult in Shakespeare’s 2 *Henry IV*.

⁶¹ Davidson and Jaine, “conger eel,” 210.

⁶² Davidson and Jaine, “fennel,” 295.

⁶³ Both Levy-Navarro (*The Culture of Obesity in Early and Late Modernity*, 182-84) and Leah S. Marcus, “Pastimes and the Purging of Theater: *Bartholomew Fair* (1614),” *Staging the*

Renaissance, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991) (202-203) discuss this episode as a form of bear-baiting. Note that Ursula's name literally means *she bear*.

⁶⁴ Ursula comments with a similarly unflattering portrait of thinness, wishing for them "lean playhouse poultry that has the bony rump sticking out like the ace of spades or the point of a partisan, that every rib of 'em is like the tooth of a saw, and will so grate'em with their hips and shoulders as, take 'em altogether, they were as good lie with a hurdle" (2.5.103-07). Ursula's words infuse the thin, bony prostitute with the power to saw apart the men paying for flesh, enticing Quarlous to threaten public punishment for her audacity: "Do you think there may be a fine new cucking stool i'the fair to be purchased? One large enough, I mean. I know there is a pond of capacity for her" (2.5.114-16). Quarlous expresses anxiety that Ursula's body size may place her outside the reach of rituals of public humiliation.

⁶⁵ Levy-Navarro, *The Culture of Obesity in Early and Late Modernity*, 176.

⁶⁶ Levy-Navarro argues that "Busy's sermon exposes the problems inherent in the puritan bodily aesthetic, which grants the thin body privilege to the extent to which it makes the fat one the embodiment of sinful appetites and excess consumption. Notably, Busy does not see himself as implicated in these three sins, but instead sees Ursula as an essential embodiment of them all" (*The Culture of Obesity in Early and Late Modernity*, 180).

⁶⁷ Maurizio Calbi, *Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 73.

⁶⁸ The terms "pastern" and "pace" again liken Ursula to a horse rather than a consumable animal.

⁶⁹ Jonson's own well-known corpulence makes his unflattering portrayal of Busy even more fascinating.

⁷⁰ Haslem, "Troubled with the Mother," 450.

Chapter 2

Disordered Consumption: Food, Surfeit, and the Body Politic in *1* and *2 Henry IV*

Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* seem to burst at the metaphorical seams with food and drink. As Falstaff compares reasons to plentiful blackberries (1:2.5.220-21) and calls repeatedly for more sack, England daubs the "thirsty entrance" of her soil with the blood of her children (1:1.1.56).¹ Soldiers become "food for powder" (1:4.2.58-59), prostitutes accuse shady characters of existing on "mouldy stewed prunes and dried cakes" (2:2.4.121-22), and crowns and countries feed upon the kings who wear and rule them (2:1.3.88; 2:4.3.286-88). What one eats and drinks, and how, and with whom – most especially when one is a prince with more than simply a natural body – were of utmost importance to popular understandings of humoral physiology and are important to our understanding of these plays. The quality and quantity of consumption in *1* and *2 Henry IV* present an opportunity to examine both the plays and the period. In this chapter, I argue that the disordered consumption Prince Hal engages in with Falstaff emerges as war and political disorder in England's body politic.

Thus far, scholars have considered the food in *1* and *2 Henry IV* metaphorically, if at all. Traditional scholarship on the plays has been concerned largely with unity of the parts: E.M.W. Tillyard argues that Shakespeare intended the parts to be taken as a unified whole rather than

interpreted separately.² Another classic critical controversy centers on Hal's transformation from an ill-behaved prince to an honorable king.³ W. Gordon Zeeveld builds on Tillyard's assertion that *1 Henry IV* expresses Shakespeare's concern with civil disorder by emphasizing the seriousness with which Shakespeare treats bloodshed and the way in which the play defines honor in relationship to the "food for powder" and "food for worms" imagery.⁴

More recently, a few scholars have confronted issues of food in the plays. Joan Fitzpatrick engages *1* and *2 Henry IV* in her comprehensive material study of food in Shakespeare's plays, but her focus frequently rests on the supposed consequences of food consumption – Falstaff's large body size – rather than on the food itself.⁵ My approach is similar to that of Fitzpatrick, but I do not assume that early modern beliefs about the relationship between food and bodies are similar to current beliefs. François Laroque considers food in association to Falstaff's role as a grotesque, carnivalesque character⁶ while William Leahy examines what hunger in the six *Henry* plays can reveal about the plight of soldiers.⁷ David Ruiters argues that Hal purposefully creates a "feast of Falstaff" in order to build public support for his kingship, intending to reject Falstaff when he becomes inconvenient to his image. Ruiters uses Hal's propensity to refer to Falstaff as meat to argue that he intends Falstaff to be the "pile of catered ribs" at England's "company picnic."⁸ Christine Hoffman connects the "royal appetite" in *Richard II* and *1* and *2 Henry IV* to the wilderness of England through the lens of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.⁹ Still, none of these scholars undertakes a material analysis of the play's food. In contrast to these readings, I seek to examine food and drink comprehensively and understand them broadly, both as important forces within the play and with an eye to how their analysis might inform traditional critical debates on the play.

I am concerned first with a material analysis of consumption in the plays and what a close reading can reveal for their context and meaning. To the early modern English viewer of *1* and *2 Henry IV*, food and drink were important conduits of meaning. However, much food knowledge taken for granted by Shakespeare's contemporaries has faded as foods have changed, and readers have replaced such knowledge with assumptions informed by their own food beliefs and practices. I will research the hierarchies and uses of, and attitudes toward, the consumable products mentioned and wielded on stage, producing a study of the materiality of food and drink – the ways in which ideas constituted the play's food – as well as food's symbolic significance.¹⁰

While the *Henry IV* plays contain a rich variety of food references, they also rely upon elaborate feeding imagery in order to characterize the larger political situation. In this portrayal, soldiers and blood are cast as food and drink for a ravenous, parched England; armies subsist by “eating the air” (2:1.3.28); the people of England are said to devour and disgorge King Richard before consuming their own vomit; war is a wild dog which “shall flesh his tooth” on innocents (2:4.3.260); and the royal crown feeds upon an ever-weakening King Henry. An analysis of the play's material food sheds considerable light on this feeding imagery, providing the historical context with which to understand what it means for England to daub the “thirsty entrance” of her soil with her children's blood (1:1.1.56). A study of consumption in these plays would be incomplete without a thorough consideration of this feeding imagery. Additionally, an examination of this feeding imagery would be incomplete without a thorough understanding of the play's more literal food and drink, consumed by Falstaff and Hal in the taverns of Eastcheap.

A material analysis of Shakespeare's *1* and *2 Henry IV* reveals food to be both an agent and a symptom of debasement. Falstaff's compulsive consumption (and especially his untempered enjoyment of sack) sends the knight into an ever-deepening hole of debt and

threatens the body natural of Prince Hal. England's political disorder and civil war, depicted in terms of the country's consumption of her own people and their blood, reveals a similar problem with disorder and surfeit in England's body politic.¹¹ In this chapter, I argue that affects of Falstaff's disordered consumption on Prince Hal's body natural emerge as political disorder within England's body politic. Simply put, Hal's proximity to bad food brings about war.

Excess in *1 Henry IV*

The period of 1550-1600 represents an unprecedented explosion of food availability.¹² This widening availability may help explain the abundance of food – and the lack of reverence for it – in *1 Henry IV*. The location of the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, a major market street in London, also sets the stage for a play that heavily involves consumption. A material analysis of the food in *1 Henry IV* reveals an emphasis on quantity and a lack of quality.

Food contributes to a clearer understanding of the social situations in the play.¹³ Virtually all of the specific foodstuffs mentioned in this play degrade the people and situations with which they are associated. Early in Act 1, Scene 2, the Norton Shakespeare footnotes "capons" in the phrase "castrated roosters," as "an Elizabethan delicacy."¹⁴ In fact, though, according to Thirsk's exhaustive historical study of food in the period, capons were so common as to be considered undesirable.¹⁵ An understanding early in the play that capons are commonplace prepares the audience for the profusion of base foods that follows. A few lines later, Falstaff taunts Prince Hal: "for grace thou wilt have none ... not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter" (1.2.15-18). Falstaff uses a pun: since an egg cooked in butter was neither a large meal nor a particularly distinctive one, its consumer wouldn't be expected to say much of a "grace" or

prayer before eating it. Here, Falstaff uses food as a way to undercut the importance and royalty of Prince Hal.

While foods like candy and blackberries may strike a present-day reader as simply charming and delicious, an early modern audience would have understood them within their own complex cultural context. When Hotspur complains of his cousin Worcester's politeness, "Why, what a candy deal of courtesy" (1.3.248), he intends to demean Worcester's attempts to discuss his concerns about the rebellion as inappropriate and sweet. Hotspur wants a kinsman who is ready to go valiantly into battle without discussion. Hotspur uses "candy," a sweet treat, to insult Worcester's masculinity and his fitness as a soldier. Later, when Prince Hal scolds Falstaff for having nothing in his pocket except "tavern reckonings, memorandums of bawdy-houses, and one poor pennyworth of sugar candy to make thee long-winded" (3.3.146-48), he demonstrates that the increasing availability of sugar in the early modern period has diminished the value of the once-coveted ingredient.¹⁶ Sugar candy now serves only to lubricate Falstaff's throat so that he may meaninglessly pontificate for a longer period of time.

Similarly, Falstaff demonstrates his unwillingness to answer to other men by declaring, "If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion" (2.5.220-22). Falstaff makes the point that even if he had such unlimited reasons as to match the profuse blackberries available to anyone, Falstaff *still* would not give reasons away for the asking.¹⁷ Later, while imitating King Henry, he pretends to scold Prince Hal: "Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher, and eat blackberries – A question not to be asked" (2.5.372-73). A micher is a petty thief or truant.¹⁸ While blackberries may command a premium in markets and natural food stores in many parts of the world today, Falstaff refers to the common European blackberry, also known as bramble, which grows easily in the wild and produces copiously in

cool climates like that of London.¹⁹ Falstaff's phrasing – "sun of heaven" – evokes a comparison with the "son of heaven," suggesting that blackberries are not only common but also notably un-Christlike. In the way that Hotspur associates Worcester with candy to demean his credibility as a warrior, Falstaff's imitation of King Henry associates Hal's lawlessness and lack of respect for his royal station with the eating of common, base blackberries. All of these examples demonstrate the low quality of food in the play.

Indeed, it seems that all of the food in *1 Henry IV* is plentiful but of sub-par quality, down to the livestock feed. While caring for the horses, the Second Carrier laments that "Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades the bots" (2.1.8-10). "Bots" are a parasite that inhabit the intestines of horses.²⁰ The Second Carrier observes that the damp, improperly stored peas and beans intended for horse feed are likely to make the horses sick. Thus even the animals are not spared the epidemic of bad food in the play.

Other characters employ food references in passing to criticize the dignity of their foes. At Gadshill, Falstaff refers to the travelers whom he is about to rob as "bacon-fed knaves" (2.2.78). Until the seventeenth century, "bacon" referred to pork of any type. Preserved pork has held an important place in the British diet for centuries, as pigs were easily kept and smoked, and salted pork gave flavor to the otherwise bland food eaten by the poor.²¹ Thus Falstaff insults the travelers by mocking the cheapness of their food. Similarly, Hotspur compares a nobleman who refuses to support his rebellion to "a dish of skim-milk" for being cowardly (2.4.28). Skimmed milk is the thin liquid remaining after the cream has been removed from whole milk, and Hotspur suggests that his nobleman lacks the hearty component required to join the rebellion. In all of these instances, references to cheap, low quality food serve to degrade the associated people and situations.

Later, Falstaff predicts the success of the rebellion by telling Prince Hal that one may buy land “as cheap as a stinking mackerel” (2.5.329). Mackerel was a common fish with a high oil content, which made it especially prone to spoilage.²² Naturally, such a fish, once spoiled, would have had very limited value in the marketplace. Thus Falstaff devalues England by comparing the land to spoiled food destined for the garbage. Such distasteful imagery depicts the realities of the food trade rather than the delicious, wholesome products one might expect (or hope) to encounter in the market. Similarly, when Hotspur is unimpressed with Lady Percy’s behavior, he compares her to those involved in food preparation: “you swear like a comfit-maker’s wife” (3.1.243-44). He then likens her words to “pepper gingerbread” (3.1.251). A comfit consisted of a seed (usually caraway) or a nut coated in multiple coats of sugar syrup.²³ As a noble, Lady Percy enjoyed a life far removed from the hard kitchen work of a comfit-maker’s wife, and Hotspur expresses his expectation that she speak less like a laborer and more like nobility. Hotspur then refers to an inferior version of gingerbread (an inexpensive food commonly served at fairs²⁴) in which ginger was replaced with pepper, which may have been cheaper and more available.²⁵ He suggests that Lady Percy’s words are no more fit for her mouth than a cheap gingerbread substitute. Yet again, food serves to bring down people and situations by association.

Other characters explicitly use food imagery to describe irksome situations, people, and states of being. Falstaff uses food in order to describe his feelings of physical exhaustion to Bardolph: “I am withered like an old apple-john” (3.3.3-4). An apple-john was a variety of apple usually kept for two years and eaten when its skin took on a shriveled texture and appearance.²⁶ He goes on to compare himself with a peppercorn, which also has a wrinkled, dry appearance (3.3.7). Falstaff compares himself to food to underline the extent to which he feels old and dried

up. Later, Falstaff insults his Hostess by claiming, “There’s no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune” (3.3.101-102). Stewed prunes were thought to offer some protection against venereal disease and thus traditionally were served in brothels.²⁷ Falstaff’s tone, of course, skeptically impugns the reliability of this protection, successfully insulting both the Hostess and the prunes. In *I Henry IV*, old, tired characters are likened to withered foods: shriveled apples, dried peppercorns, and prunes.

Similarly, when Falstaff refers disparagingly to the poor, weak men he has gathered for his company as “toasts and butter” (4.2.19), he refers to an unfashionable way of eating toast in a time of plenty. During the sixteenth century, elaborate toppings for toast became increasingly popular. At first, “‘hashes’ based on finely chopped meat were served” on toast, and by the end of the century, “all kinds of things began to appear on toast, such as poached eggs (which had been previously served in broth); buttered (scrambled) eggs; ham or bacon, anchovies; and melted cheese.”²⁸ Therefore, Falstaff’s comparison draws his men as cheaper, less hearty versions of a popular dish – toast covered merely with a scraping of butter as opposed to a hearty meat spread or other savory, high-protein topping. He then goes on to accuse the men of “eating draff and husks,” or pig feed (4.2.32), suggesting they are too destitute and desperate to afford even the humble food to which he compares them.

Finally, Hotspur complains of Glyndwr, frustrated with his comrade’s lack of cooperation, “I had rather live / With cheese and garlic, in a windmill, far, / Than feed on cates and have him talk to me / in any summer house in Christendom” (3.1.157-60). Hotspur associates the luxury of summer houses with “cates,” foodstuffs which were purchased (rather than home-produced) and usually considered delicate and dainty.²⁹ He prefers living far from Glyndwr in a windmill with cheese and garlic. Cheese, because of its ease and utility (to preserve

milk from going bad in the absence of refrigeration), would have been commonly produced in any household in which milk was available.³⁰ Garlic's strong smell has historically made it less popular with the upper classes and aristocracy than with the common people.³¹ Hotspur uses his disdain for common foods – and the audience's understanding of that disdain – in order to intensify his expression of anger toward Glyndwr. Hotspur's treatment of food is typical of the characters in *1 Henry IV*. This material analysis of the play's food reveals it as consistently base and ignoble.

A material analysis of the wine in the play is similarly revealing. Falstaff's consumption of wine exposes his disordered ingestion and his unwholesome influence on Prince Hal. Though Falstaff consumes wine primarily in the form of sack, the play also mentions bastard and Madeira wines. "Bastard" refers to "a sweet kind of Spanish wine, resembling muscadell in flavour, sometimes applied to any kind of sweetened wine."³² In his 1622 dietary, Tobias Venner writes that "Bastard ... is in goodnesse so much inferior to Muskadell, as the same is to Malmsey, the use thereof is likewise hurtfull to young and hot bodies."³³ According to André L. Simon, bastard cost 1s.2d., while sack cost only 10d.³⁴ Relative to the other wines consumed, this makes bastard the most expensive, which may be why Prince Hal speaks both of the play's two references to this wine. In his drunken monologue, Prince Hal orders the wine to be sent to his inn room: "Score a pint of bastard in the Half-moon" (2.5.23-24). Even though it was more expensive than sack, bastard was not considered a sophisticated wine or fine drink: Prince Hal later warns Francis he might become so poor as to render brown bastard his best drink (2.5.68-69). "Madeira" refers to a fortified white or amber-colored wine produced on the island of Madeira.³⁵ In Act 1, Scene 2, Poins accuses Falstaff of selling his soul "for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg" (1.2.102-103). Simon classifies Madeira as a type of sack,³⁶ the general name

for a class of white wines imported from Spain.³⁷ Of course, sack is Falstaff's wine of choice. According to Simon's economic history of wine in the period, sack was the least expensive of the three types of wine discussed in the play.³⁸

Falstaff consumes sack in a manner that is disorderly and out of control. The play introduces his character with Prince Hal's accusation that the knight is "fat-witted with drinking of old sack" (1.2.2-3). When he finds himself the butt of a joke at Gadshill, he pleads, "let a cup of sack be my poison" (2.2.42-43). Falstaff spends most of Act 2, Scene 5 drinking on the stage. He demands, "Give me a cup of sack" no fewer than five times in this scene (2.5.105, 107, 138, 350). He proudly and somewhat endearingly proclaims his appetite to the world: "If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked" (2.5.428-29). Prince Hal, imitating his father, asks of Falstaff, "Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? Wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it?" (2.5.414-16). Falstaff's characterization as a comic figure relies heavily on his excessive consumption of sack.

But Prince Hal's reaction to the items on Falstaff's receipts hints at a darker side to this consumption. The prince, who is familiar with – and even indulgent of – Falstaff's appetite for sack, is alarmed at the disproportionate nature of his drinking: "O monstrous! But one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!" (2.5.493-94). Falstaff's failure to consume a more appropriate amount of food with his sack indicates to Hal a problem with his drinking. In addition, Falstaff drinks beyond his means to pay, driving himself into deepening debt. The Hostess complains about his growing tab: "You owe money here besides, Sir John: for your diet, and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four-and-twenty pound" (3.3.64-65). But Falstaff shoos her off, suggesting that Bardolph pay the bill, and continues drinking, repeating his familiar chorus: "fill me a bottle of sack" (4.2.1-2). In contrast to the lighthearted, comic

scenes, these instances suggest that Falstaff's relationship with sack is problematic and unhealthy.

Whether portrayed as harmless fun or as dangerous, Falstaff's drinking influences Prince Hal's behavior. Both my material and symbolic interpretation of the play reveal Prince Hal as being genuinely allied and even intertwined with Falstaff. Certainly he recognizes that Falstaff and his cronies are companions unfit for a prince, but his speech at the end of Act 1, Scene 2 is more appropriately taken as the prince's aspirational goal to reform his bad habits than an indication that he is cruelly using the men to further his political career. Hal fantasizes about a prince (himself) who is admired for "breaking through the foul and ugly mists / Of vapours that did seem to strangle him" (1.2.180-81). This daydream bespeaks his entanglement with the "idleness" and "loose behavior" in which he feels compelled to participate. His closing lines, "I'll so offend to make offence a skill, / Redeeming time when men think least I will" (1.2.194-95), smack of an excuse to play at being a rogue just a *little* longer. Hal acknowledges the extent of his own drinking in an amusing drunken monologue in Act 2, Scene 5: "I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life" (2.5.13-17). The prince is such a proficient drinker that he can order drinks in any language necessary. Clearly this is not the diplomatic skill set for which King Henry fervently hopes.

Falstaff's influence on Prince Hal is politically significant because of the prince's relationship to the body politic. While scholars have not traditionally considered an heir to be connected to the king's body natural or the country's body politic while the king still lives, there is room for this interpretation in the scholarship. Lorna Hutson argues that the English consciously and deliberately witnessed the concept of the body politic in dramatic

representations of the period.³⁹ Ernst H. Kantorowicz establishes that the succession of a son does not require an interval of time. He describes “an invisible and immaterial Crown – encompassing all the royal rights and privileges indispensable for the government of the body politic – which was perpetual and descended either from God directly or by the dynastic right of inheritance.”⁴⁰ Kantorowicz continues,

The “oneness” of father and son, and therewith the very complex idea of identity of predecessor and successor, thus had roots also in the law of inheritance: the dying king and the new king became one with regard to the invisible and perpetual Crown which represented the substance of the inheritance ... successor and predecessor appeared as the same person with regard to the personified office or dignity.⁴¹

Hal’s right and privilege of succession situate him within this invisible, immaterial, and perpetual crown. Kantorowicz blurs the line between the natural body of the “dying king” and the “new king.” While King Henry is not actively dying in *1 Henry IV*, he finds himself in a weakened and vulnerable state politically after his usurpation of the throne, and this condition catches up with him physically in *2 Henry IV*.

I argue that Hal’s place within the “immaterial Crown” and his father’s political vulnerability together manifest in an unusually strong connection between Prince Hal and England’s body politic. Henry V’s kingship begins to die before his body follows suit. As I shall demonstrate in the rest of this section, the influence of Falstaff’s disordered consumption of vulgar food and wine on Hal’s body natural forms a systematic parallel with the influence of England’s political disorder on the body politic, signifying Hal’s connection to the body politic long before he becomes king. Falstaff’s intention to offer his collection of destitute, desperate

men as fodder for the hunger of war calls attention to the soldiers' similarity to the plentiful yet vulgar food and drink consumed in the taverns.

The characters of *I Henry IV* treat the play's abundant food and drink with marked irreverence, and this treatment sheds considerable light on the play's broader eating imagery. The play's low-quality food, excess wine, and disordered consumption are reflected in England's political situation. Images of gluttony, excess, and imbalance depict the political disorder in England's body politic. Imagery of political feeding emerges early in the play. The fifth line of Act 1, Scene 1 depicts an England thirsty for blood: "No more the thirsty entrance of this soil / Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood" (1.1.5-6). Hotspur speaks in similar terms out of his passion for Mortimer: "In his behalf I'll empty all these veins, / And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust" (1.3.131-32). Hotspur's abstemious character emerges as a foil to Falstaff as he feeds his blood to the country Falstaff seems determined to consume. The then-new King Henry's statement at the end of *Richard II* – "that blood should sprinkle me to make me grow" (5.6.46) – further supports the image of England as bloodthirsty. All of these images may be understood within the context of the play's material food – in this play, England's lip-daubing, Hotspur's bleeding, and King Henry's growth from sprinkled blood represent a meaningful extension of the dysfunction and gluttony taking place within the taverns.

Furthermore, these references to blood are marked with significance, as the early modern English audience member would have associated blood with wine (including sack, Madeira, and bastard). Wine was thought to be blood's constituent food. Ken Albala explores the ancient association:

The connection between blood and wine was not merely a coincidence of substance, color, or external 'signatures,' which may have suggested similar virtues. Rather, it is a

deeper recognition that wine and blood are both made the same way. Both involve a crushing, fermenting, separating from various by-products, and ultimately refining for use. Like blood, wine can also be further distilled into *aqua vitae*, or ‘sprints,’ a term we still use.⁴²

Blood and wine were intimately connected in the ways early modern audiences understood physiology. Therefore, the dramatic bloodshed alluded in these lines directly mirrors the copious flow of wine in the tavern scenes.

In much the same way that the intemperate wine consumption of Falstaff and Hal is associated with England’s thirst for blood, the play’s obsession with cheap, low-quality food parallels the war’s hunger for the bodies of men. Like the material consumption in the play, this hunger is imbalanced and intemperate. In lecturing Prince Hal, King Henry compares his own carefully withheld public self to a feast, “seldom but sumptuous,” but suggests that his son’s habit of mingling with the public and “being daily swallowed with men’s eyes” has caused his people to surfeit with honey, of which “a little / more than a little is by much too much” (3.2.57-73). King Henry then associates appetite with political unrest, claiming that Hotspur and Douglas have sought “to fill the mouth of deep defiance up” (3.2.116). Such a phrase evokes Falstaff’s insatiable appetite.

Falstaff’s language is even less subtle than King Henry’s. In order to justify allowing the stronger, wealthier soldiers to bribe themselves out of duty, leaving only poor, weak soldiers of inferior quality, he remarks, “Tut, tut, good enough to toss, food for powder, food for powder. They’ll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men” (4.3.58-60). We may understand his words as even more problematic than they initially seem.⁴³ Falstaff depicts his men as yet another kind of plentiful, low-quality food, destined either to be devoured insatiably

by gunpowder or to be tossed in a garbage pit with the other cheap, spoiled commodities. The characters' lack of respect for the play's food provides the careful reader with tools to better understand the play's food imagery. The "pit" in this image begins to take on characteristics of England which, like Falstaff, is controlled by an appetite that knows no bounds. The idea that the desperate, destitute men he has gathered will do as much to satiate England's appetite as a group of better men implies that satisfaction is elusive in this play. No quality of soldier will satiate England, just as no quality (or quantity?) of food and drink will satiate Falstaff.

Later, Worcester uses feeding imagery to express his dissatisfaction with King Henry's treatment of his family:

You took occasion to be quickly wooed ...
 And being fed by us, you used us so
 As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
 Useth the sparrow – did oppress our nest,
 Grew by our feeding so great a bulk
 That even our love durst not come near your sight
 For fear of swallowing. (5.1.56-64)

Worcester believes that King Henry's regime has fed intemperately upon the members of his house, growing "by our feeding so great a bulk" that Worcester and his allies were forced to distance themselves for fear of being swallowed up entirely. Later, when Worcester considers whether to make peace, he worries about his future: "And we shall feed like oxen at a stall, / The better cherished still the nearer death" (5.2.14-15). Again he draws upon images of feeding – this time, he imagines accepting food from King Henry only to learn that he is being fattened for consumption, like an oxen that is increasingly lavished with food the nearer slaughter

approaches. In both of these instances, Worcester stylizes the rebellion as unfairly and inappropriately consumed by the ruling party. Again, both of these instances evoke the problematic consumption by Prince Hal, Falstaff, and their companions, suggesting a connection between Prince Hal's behavior and England's political unrest.

Falstaff applies this language of feeding to his own body, too. Feeling rejected by Prince Hal, who has mistaken Falstaff's resting body as slain, he jokingly sulks in an aside: "If thou embowel me today, I'll give you leave to powder me, and eat me too, tomorrow" (5.4.110-11). To "powder" a food meant to preserve it in salt; therefore, Falstaff implies that Prince Hal might consume his body in the manner of the salted pork for which he mocked the travelers in Act 2, Scene 2. And when Prince Hal slays Hotspur in battle, Hotspur's last words, cut short by his death, suggest his identification as food:

HOTSPUR. No, Percy, thou art dust,

And food for –

PRINCE HARRY. For worms, brave Percy. (5.4.84-86)

Because Prince Hal's words are spoken with respect and reverence, they are easily taken as Hotspur's intended ending; however, Worcester's earlier descriptions of Bolingbroke food and feeding insinuate other possibilities – namely, that he is about to become figurative food for Prince Hal.

As Falstaff's influence impacts the natural body of Prince Hal, the political disorder created by King Henry's usurpation of the English throne afflicts the body politic. Significantly, Sir Walter Blunt disguises himself as the king and enters the battlefield in Act 5, Scene 3, confusing Douglas who is after King Henry. Blunt's disguise underscores the disorganization within the body politic: between Henry, Hal, and Blunt, the body politic appears to have too

many heads. Both materially and politically, food and feeding cause and reflect the erosion of Bolingbroke authority.

1 Henry IV ends optimistically, though the political situation is quite dire. When Prince Hal asks for Falstaff's sword and receives instead a bottle of sack, he throws the bottle back at Falstaff in exasperation. His ability to recognize the inappropriateness of sack to the dire circumstance of battle surpasses Falstaff's capacities and finally allows Prince Hal to reject, both physically and figuratively, Falstaff's influence. Hal's pitching of the bottle is an important and hopeful moment for himself and for England. This reading supports the connection between Hal's natural body and England's body politic, associating Falstaff and his disordered consumption with political bloodthirst and ravenousness.

Food and drink in this play are plentiful but of vulgar, degraded quality. Prince Hal's participation in the intemperate consumption of wine with Falstaff affects Hal's ability to perform his princely duties and impacts the health of England's body politic. Images of gluttony, excess, and imbalance dominate the play's political situation. The country's civil war manifests as hunger for the plentiful, pitiful soldiers that Falstaff gathers as fodder for the rebellion, and the increasingly dire situation weakens both country and King.

Deterioration and *2 Henry IV*

Despite the promise of Prince Hal's act at the end of Part 1, *2 Henry IV* depicts an exhausted world that civil war has filled with illness, debt, and deterioration. A material analysis reveals a continuation and intensification of the pattern of low-quality food shown in Part 1. Falstaff's first mention of eating in this play refers to poison: "I had as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth as offer to stop it with security" (1.2.36-37). Falstaff's hyperbole reflects

the more dire mood of Part 2 and prepares the audience for an even more dysfunctional portrayal of consumption.

In Act 2, Scene 1, Mistress Quickly recounts a story to Falstaff in which the butcher's wife visits "to borrow a mess of vinegar, telling us she had a good dish of prawns" (2.1.86-87). According to Venner, prawns were generally thought to be an acceptable food except for those with weak stomachs.⁴⁴ Vinegar was frequently used as a dressing for all kinds of seafood.⁴⁵ It is somewhat curious that the butcher's wife would be in need of vinegar, as English housewives were wont to make vinegar – or allow vinegar to happen, as "it makes itself without difficulties"⁴⁶ – from their own sour wine or ale.⁴⁷ Quickly relates that Falstaff discouraged her "familiarity with such poor people" (2.1.91). As in *1 Henry IV*, food is used here in order to degrade the butcher's wife as lower class (or simply a poor housekeeper) because she lacks vinegar.

In Part 2, Sir John is again compared to an apple-john (as in Part 1), only this time the comparison is even less favorable: "The Prince once set a dish of apple-johns before him; and told him, there were five more Sir Johns; and, putting off his hat, said 'I will now take my leave of these six dry, round, old, withered knights'" (2.4.3-6). This comment "angered" Falstaff "to the heart" (2.4.7). Rather than Falstaff gently mocking himself with food comparisons, as in Part 1, Part 2 describes Prince Hal humiliating Falstaff with food comparisons. Humiliation characterizes many of the food references in Part 2, as Mistress Quickly scolds Doll Tearsheet and Falstaff for arguing: "You two never meet but you fall to some discord. You are both, i' good truth, as rheumatic as two dry toasts; you cannot one bear with another's confirmities" (2.4.48-49). Again, as in Part 1, toasts without toppings are employed to demonstrate the sad condition of the play's characters.⁴⁸ Doll Tearsheet then insults Pistol by criticizing his diet: "He lives upon

mouldy stewed prunes and dried cakes” (2.4.121-22). As in Part 1, the prune/brothel association humiliates the character,⁴⁹ but Tearsheet takes the insult even further by suggesting that the prunes are moldy from age or improper storage. The cakes she mentions most likely resembled biscuits, cookies, or sponge cakes;⁵⁰ each of these pastries becomes dry and stale with age. Pistol, then, subsists on food that others of better taste and means would reject. Even more significantly, stale, dessicated food demeans Falstaff, Doll Tearsheet, and Pistol by association.

Falstaff uses food to explain why Prince Hal keeps company with Poins, conjecturing that it’s because “he eats conger and fennel” (2.4.219). A conger eel is a large, voracious grey-brown fish that lives in the Atlantic ocean and ventures from rocky crevices to feed at night. It has a reputation for attacking swimmers who are unlucky enough to disturb it during the day, and is considered the biggest and most ferocious fish a bather is likely to encounter. Conger was a commonly consumed food in England and Wales; the tail was reserved for soup and the middle was poached, braised, or roasted.⁵¹ It was considered a problematic and unhealthy food for many, particularly those prone to a host of ailments.⁵² Fennel was widely available and commonly served with fish.⁵³ This meal apparently has some association with prostitution in early modern drama, as Ursula compares the dish to an unpleasantly thin prostitute in Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* and Doll Tearsheet (a prostitute) accuses Falstaff of being a “muddy conger” earlier in some versions of Act 2, Scene 4.⁵⁴ Falstaff’s speculation, then, suggests at the very least Poins’s, and Prince Hal’s, involvement in disreputable situations.

In Act 5, Shallow invites Falstaff to share a snack: “Nay, you shall see my orchard, where, in an arbour, we will eat a last year’s pippin of mine own grafting, with a dish of caraways” (5.3.1-3). In current usage, a “pippin” refers to a dessert apple,⁵⁵ but in the sixteenth century “the term had come to denote a hard, late-ripening, long-keeping apple of acid

flavour.”⁵⁶ Caraway seeds were regarded as healthful and pleasant,⁵⁷ and thus may have made the acidic flavor of the apple more palatable.⁵⁸ Considering Falstaff’s earlier comparison to an apple-john, another variety kept for long-term storage, Shallow may offer this variety of apple in mockery rather than hospitality.

As the food references represent a less lighthearted and increasingly undignified situation, the promise and hope of Hal rejecting Falstaff at the end of Part 1 seems lost by Act 2 of Part 2. Hal continues to participate in drinking and other antics unbecoming of a king with Falstaff, who exalts sack with even more vigor than in Part 1. Falstaff continues to self-identify as a drinker, not a soldier, denouncing his intent to “brandish anything but my bottle” on a hot day (1.2.192-93). Falstaff’s problems with debt emerge more fully in Part 2 as a symptom of his disordered consumption: “I can get no remedy against this *consumption* of the purse. Borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable” (1.3.217-19, emphasis added). Falstaff’s use of the term “consumption” refers to an ailment characterized by “an abnormality or loss of humors resulting in wasting (extreme weight loss) of the body.”⁵⁹ Falstaff’s money troubles can be similarly understood as a kind of self-consumption, a borrowing from his own future income and a stress on his future expenses. Falstaff’s consumption of sack has caused his purse to suffer from humoral consumption.

Of Falstaff’s increasing bill, Mistress Quickly bewails: “He hath eaten me out of house and home. He hath put all my substance into that fat belly of his” (2.1.67-68). Mistress Quickly successfully procures a judgment from the Lord Chief Justice for all that Falstaff has consumed but refused to fund: “Pay her the debt you owe her, and unpay the villany you have done with her” (2.1.108-110). But Falstaff uses his charisma to convince Quickly to loan him even more money. Falstaff’s chorus remains similar to that of Part 1 (“Give me a cup of sack;” “Fill me a

bottle of sack!”) and is repeated, in variation, throughout the scene: “Come, give me some sack” (2.4.156, 159, 253). Doll Tearsheet describes Falstaff: “There’s a whole merchant’s venture of Bordeaux stuff in him; you have not seen a hulk better stuffed in the hold” (2.4.54-56). She uses language of excess to underline the excessive drinking and the progression of Falstaff’s intemperance. By Act 4, Falstaff extols the virtues of sack with increasing obsession, concluding that it clears the head, produces wit, warms the blood, and revitalizes the heart’s courage (4.2.86-111). Prince Hal continues to be affected by Falstaff’s influence. He ruminates on his own drinking: “Doth it not show vilely in me to desire small beer?” (2.2.5-6); “Belike then my appetite was not princely got; for, by my troth, I do now remember the poor creature small beer” (2.2.9-10). As the play’s food is increasingly depicted as stale and its wine is purchased on credit, Hal’s admission of an “appetite ... not princely got” bodes poorly for his promise as king.

England’s government becomes even more precarious as Falstaff’s influence over Prince Hal grows. Part 2 continues and builds upon the metaphor of the disordered body politic, focusing on images of excess and surfeit. Northumberland identifies the problem of surfeit and indulgent excess at the beginning of the play: “The times are wild: contention, like a horse / Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose, / and bears down all before him” (1.1.9-11). Northumberland’s representation of the excessive and indulgent nature of the Bolingbroke family’s consumption – their “high feeding” – stands in direct contrast to the degradation of Part 2’s material food.

As before, the rebellion leaders classify themselves as starving, while King Henry and his allies feast injudiciously. Lord Bardolph laments that Hotspur, in wait of aid, instead ended up “Eating the air on promise of supply” (1.3.28). The Archbishop of York characterizes the people

of England as complicit in the problem, if not the outright cause: “The commonwealth is sick of their own choice; / Their over-greedy love hath surfeited” (1.3.88). He continues, vividly:

O thou fond many, with what loud applause
 Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke, ...
 And being now trimmed in thine own desires,
 That thou provok’st thyself to cast him up.
 So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge
 Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard;
 And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,
 And howl’st to find it (1.3.91-100).

England’s populace has greedily and too-quickly consumed Henry IV and then quickly vomited him up just as they formerly disgorged their “glutton bosom” of Richard II. Now, the people howl with regret and wish to find and eat the “dead vomit” that is their former King Richard, whom they have recently decided to prefer. In the symbolism of *1* and *2 Henry IV*, the body politic has progressed from being merely thirsty for blood to eating and vomiting entire bodies of monarchs. Again, the material context of such feasting informs the metaphor, emphasizing the unwholesome items available for consumption, whether moldy stewed prunes or metaphorical vomit.

King Henry’s language also evokes the imagery of eating. When he awakens to realize Prince Hal has taken the crown, King Henry laments that his son has taken advantage of his labor. King Henry imagines himself as a worker bee “Culling from every flower the virtuous sweets, / Our thighs packed with wax, our mouths with honey” (4.3.203-204). He has worked solely for the benefit of Hal, and yet King Henry is left at the end with nothing but the “bitter

taste” of his son’s excessive eagerness (4.3.206). Finally, like the Archbishop of York who opposes his rule, King Henry engages in the metaphor of the ravenous dog:

For the fifth Harry from curbed license plucks
 The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog
 Shall flesh his tooth on every innocent
 O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows! (4.3.258-61)

In King Henry’s imagination, a “muzzle of restraint” holds back murderous consumption in his kingdom. As he has seen little which causes him to expect his son and successor to maintain such a muzzle, he laments the innocents on which the dog is destined to feast. Despite all of his careful planning, King Henry imagines that which he has tried to preserve devoured in an instant.

As the play moves from the taverns and the irresponsible youth of Prince Hal to his kingship, actual food and drink (a reminder of the monarch's mortality, vulnerability, and similarity to common people) become less prominent. If we view these plays as an account of Prince Hal coming of age – his rise to the head of the body politic – we see him leaving material food and his concern with his natural appetites behind. This may help explain why Shakespeare's descriptions of food, drink, and people actually eating taper so dramatically from the beginning of Part 1 to the end of Part 2.

Prince Hal takes part in the play’s food imagery despite the disappearance of material food from the final scenes of Part 2. He interprets the crown of England as the ravenous agent:

The care on thee depending
 Hath fed upon the body of my father
 Therefore thou best of gold art worst of gold
 Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,

Preserving life in medicine potable;
 But thou, most fine, most honoured, most renowned,
 Hast eat thy bearer up (4.3.286-88).

His removal of the crown from his father's pillow, then, is a gesture of protection toward his father, an acceptance of responsibility that bespeaks Hal's capacity for self-sacrifice: the crown has consumed King Henry; next in line is Prince Hal. Upon their reconciliation, King Henry makes peace with being consumed by England: "For all the soil of the achievement goes / With me into the earth" (4.3.317-18). He predicts that England will swallow himself and his sins, righting the disorder within his country, removing the taint of his usurpation from his son, and reordering the body politic. King Henry's usurpation of England's throne is thus associated with Prince Hal's poor choice of sustenance and companions; both are threats to the social order.

Upon the death of King Henry, King Hal admonishes Falstaff for being "So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane" (5.5.48). He commands him to "leave gormandizing" (2:5.5.51) and puts him on an allowance for "competence of life" (64), which will permit purchase only of strict necessities. Falstaff will be forced to reform himself for any advancement, and thus must cease drinking and consuming himself into debt. Rather than responding to King Hal, Falstaff's next words are tinged with disappointment but also acceptance of responsibility as he turns to his companion: "Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound" (5.5.70). Unsustainable consumption comes to an end for Prince Hal's natural body when he rejects Falstaff and for England's body politic when Prince Hal accedes the throne. In the way that Falstaff must better manage his personal economy of food and sack, Hal must better manage England's economy of bodies. Before his death, King Henry instructs Prince Hal to "busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels" (4.3.341-42); in other words, the King advises him to turn the energy and destruction of civil war

outward. Like Falstaff, the body politic has been enmired in a kind of self-consumption, drinking the blood of soldiers during civil war and consuming monarchs. Soon, these destructive energies will focus outward on France.

Epilogue poignantly words his promise at the end of the play: “If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it” (Epilogue 23-25). Of course, *2 Henry IV* is Shakespeare’s final play featuring Sir John Falstaff, so editors assume this promise is a mistake or that Shakespeare had originally intended to write Falstaff into *Henry V*. Such an interpretation presupposes that the condition of the promise will be met, however; perhaps Epilogue concludes that, by the end of the play, the audience *would* necessarily be too much cloyed with fat meat – literally, figuratively, or both.

In this chapter, I have argued that the relationship between Falstaff’s disordered, vulgar consumption and Prince Hal’s body natural is analogous to the relationship between political disorder and England’s body politic. A material analysis of the food in *1 Henry IV* reveals an emphasis on plentiful food with little value, and the play’s references to foodstuffs consistently degrade the people and situations with whom and with which they are associated. A material analysis of the play’s wine exposes Falstaff’s intemperate, disordered consumption and his unhealthy influence on Prince Hal. Both my material and symbolic interpretations reveal Prince Hal as being genuinely involved, even entangled, with Falstaff. Hal’s place within the “immaterial Crown” and his father’s political vulnerability together manifest in an unusually strong connection between Prince Hal and England’s body politic. As such, the influence of Falstaff’s disordered consumption on Hal’s body natural forms a systematic parallel with the influence of England’s political disorder on the body politic. The disordered consumption Prince

Hal engages in with Falstaff emerges as war and political disorder in England's body politic. Images of gluttony, excess, and imbalance depict the political disorder in England's body politic: the wine of the tavern is associated with the blood of soldiers, while the cheap food is linked with their bodies.

2 Henry IV depicts an exhausted world that civil war has filled with illness, debt, and deterioration. A material analysis of consumption in Part 2 reveals a continuation and intensification of the dysfunctional portrayal of consumption depicted in Part 1. As Falstaff's influence over Prince Hal grows, England's government becomes even more precarious. Falstaff's consumption-related debt presents an increasing problem to the knight and Prince Hal's admission of an "appetite ... not princely got" fails to inspire confidence in his royal destiny. The symbolism of Part 2 builds upon the metaphor of the disordered body politic, focusing on images of excess and surfeit. Falstaff and political disorder seem to feed off one another until England gulps the body of King Henry and King Hal rejects Falstaff as a companion. A careful and comprehensive examination of consumption in these plays reclaims some of the cultural richness that early modern audiences would have experienced and reveals a connection between consumption and the perceived roots of political dysfunction in this period. At the end of *2 Henry IV*, the food and drink that threaten to burst the play's seams begin channeling outward to France, promising an England more comfortably contained within her borders.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Unless otherwise noted, references to Shakespeare's plays are from William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, Second Edition, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

² E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*, "The Second Tetralogy," (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), 264-303.

³ For a discussion and history of the controversy, see Jonathan Crewe, "Reforming Prince Hal: The Sovereign Inheritor in *2 Henry IV*," *Renaissance Drama* 21 (1990): 225-42 as well as Elsa Sjoborg, "From Madcap Prince to King: The Evolution of Prince Hal," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20.1 (Winter 1969): 11-16.

⁴ W. Gordon Zeeveld, "'Food for Powder' – 'Food for Worms,'" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 3.3 (July 1952): 249-253.

⁵ Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare: Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays*, "Familiar Extremes: The Case of Sir John Oldcastle" (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 11-36.

⁶ Francois Laroque, "Shakespeare's 'Battle of Carnival and Lent': The Falstaff Scenes Reconsidered (*1 and 2 Henry IV*)," *Shakespeare and Carnival*, ed. Ronald Knowles (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 83-96.

⁷ William Leahy, "'Thy hunger-starved men': Shakespeare's *Henry* Plays and the Contemporary Lot of the Common Soldier," *Parergon* 20.2 (July 2003): 119-134.

⁸ David Ruiter, *Shakespeare's Festive History* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 93.

⁹ Christine Hoffman, "Biting More Than 'We' Can Chew: The Royal Appetite in *Richard II* and *1 and 2 Henry IV*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 45.4 (Fall 2009): 358-85.

¹⁰ I seek to strike a balance between qualitative and quantitative analyses of food items as material objects. See Jonathan Gill Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-31 for a discussion of these methodologies.

¹¹ The “body natural” and “body politic” are terms (used first in late medieval political theology) that describe the two bodies of a monarch. The body natural is like any other human body, while the body politic is immortal, infallible, and ever-present. See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4-5.

¹² Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 27-57.

¹³ Because the play’s wine consumption lends itself to an understanding of political as well as social situations, I discuss wine in more detail later.

¹⁴ Jean E. Howard, Note 4, *I Henry IV*, *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd Edition, by William Shakespeare (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 1191.

¹⁵ Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 80.

¹⁶ Prince Hal’s association of sugar with taverns and brothels here further diminishes sugar.

¹⁷ This line can also be read as a food pun, as reasons would have been pronounced similarly to *raisins* in the period.

¹⁸ “mitcher, n,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

¹⁹ Alan Davidson and Tom Jaine, eds., “blackberry,” *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 81. Furthermore, it used to be considered unlucky in Britain to pick blackberries late in the season (the editors list regional variants on the date, from late September to mid-October); “later than this, the devil was believed to have stamped or spat on the berries” (81).

²⁰ “bot, bott, *n.1*,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

²¹ Davidson and Jaine, “bacon,” 49.

²² Davidson and Jaine, “mackerel,” 470.

²³ Davidson and Jaine, “comfit,” 207.

²⁴ See the character Joan Trash in Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*.

²⁵ “pepper, *n.*, *c.1*,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000). A similar concoction was referred to as “pepper cake.”

²⁶ “apple-john, *n.*,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

²⁷ Gordon Williams, “stewed prunes,” *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone Press, 1994), 1314.

²⁸ Davidson and Jaine, “toast,” 800.

²⁹ “cate, *n.1*,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

³⁰ Davidson and Jaine, “cheese,” 160-62.

³¹ Davidson and Jaine, “garlic,” 331-32.

³² “bastard, n.4,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

³³ Tobias Venner, *VIA RECTA AD VITAM LONGAM, OR A PLAINE PHILOSOPHICALL DISCOVRSE OF THE Nature, faculties, and effects, of all such things as by way of nourishments, and Dieteticall ovseruations, make for the preseruatiō of Health, with their iust applications vnto euery age, constitution of body, and time of YEARE* (London, 1622) 26. From the Library of Dr. and Mrs. John Talbot Gernon, The Lilly Library, The University of Indiana.

³⁴ André L. Simon, *The History of the Wine Trade in England*, Volume 2 (London: Wyman & Sons, Ltd., 1907) 127. The abbreviation “d” (1s.2d.) stands for pence and derives from *denarius*, for the latin coin.

³⁵ “madeira, n.1,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

³⁶ Simon, *The History of the Wine Trade in England*, 210.

³⁷ “sack, n.3,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

³⁸ Simon, *The History of the Wine Trade in England*, 127.

³⁹ Lorna Hutson, “Not the King’s Two Bodies: Reading the ‘Body Politic’ in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*, Parts 1 and 2,” *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 166-198. Hutson argues that Kantorowicz oversimplified the people’s understanding of the body politic and that the English understood the concept as a limit to absolute monarchy and an evolving sense of equity.

⁴⁰ Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 337.

⁴¹ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 338.

⁴² Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 73-74.

⁴³ And indeed, Falstaff's men do come to humble ends: "I have led my ragamuffins where they are peppered; there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive" (5.3.35-37).

⁴⁴ Venner, *VIA RECTA*, 79-80.

⁴⁵ Albala, *Eating Right*, 242.

⁴⁶ Davidson and Jaine, "vinegar," 830.

⁴⁷ Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England*, 51.

⁴⁸ See reference at note 28 for more information on toast toppings of the period.

⁴⁹ See note 27.

⁵⁰ Davidson and Jaine, "cake," 125.

⁵¹ Davidson and Jaine, "conger eel," 210.

⁵² Venner, *VIA RECTA*, 76-77.

⁵³ Davidson and Jaine, "fennel," 295.

⁵⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth, The Pelican Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002), 1080-1123. See 2.4.52.

⁵⁵ "pippin, *n.*," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

⁵⁶ Davidson and Jaine, "apple," 29.

⁵⁷ Venner, *VIA RECTA*, 162.

⁵⁸ There seems to be some evidence for a history pippins with caraway as a traditional combination; see usage examples at “pippin, *n.*,” The Oxford English Dictionary.

⁵⁹ “consumption, *n.*,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

Chapter 3

Voracious Mothers: Craving and Identity in *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and *The Magnetic Lady*

The early modern English stage presents four plays that feature pregnancy cravings between 1588 and 1632. In Act 4, Scene 2 of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, Faustus observes, when entertaining the pregnant Duchess of Vanholt, "I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other. What is it, madam? Tell me, and you shall have it" (4-6).¹ The Duchess confesses to her craving and requests a dish of ripe grapes. In Act 2, Scene 1 of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Pompey observes how Mistress Elbow "came in great with child, and longing ... for stewed prunes" (81-82). In Act 2, Scene 1 of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Bosola, suspecting the Duchess's secret pregnancy, offers her apricots and observes how "her color rises" and "[h]ow greedily she eats them!" (133, 151), taking her appetite for the fruit as proof of her condition.² Shortly thereafter, the Duchess goes into labor, apparently induced by the apricots. And, finally, in Act 1, Scene 4 of Jonson's *The Magnetic Lady*, the young and secretly pregnant Mistress Placentia's ignorant doctor marvels at her strange eating habits: "she can cranch / A sack of small coal! Eat you lime, and hair, / Soap-ashes, loam, and has a dainty

spice / O'the green sickness.”³ The presence of such cravings raises questions about pregnancy and food in early modern English drama.

Literary scholars have examined early modern medical and religious beliefs about pregnancy, and historical accounts of pregnancy occasionally address nutritional beliefs. According to Monika Karpinska, men feared women in the liminal state of pregnancy because their lack of control over the reproductive process both mystified and frightened them.⁴ Mary Fissell argues that, before the Protestant Reformation, pregnant women were associated with the Virgin Mary. The women themselves and their wombs were considered mysterious and powerful. Protestant churches altered this narrative by forbidding the relics that the Catholic church once encouraged pregnant women to rely upon during childbirth. Protestantism additionally deemphasized the generative power of the womb, emphasizing instead the power of God to craft the unborn. The pain of childbirth as punishment for sin became a powerful defining feature of the popular understanding of pregnancy.⁵ Jacques Gélis argues that the diets of pregnant women in history have often been characterized by undernutrition as well as “monotony, insufficient protein and seasonal variation.”⁶ Collective wisdom and lore held that a pregnant woman’s cravings must be indulged – demonstrated by the eagerness of Win Littlewit’s family to satisfy her feigned craving in Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* – but some early modern doctors argued that pregnancy cravings were a conspiracy of women “seeking a pretext to satisfy their natural inclinations with impunity.”⁷ Despite such coverage, however, sustained literary studies of the relationship between food and pregnancy are elusive.

Scholars have undertaken relatively little to understand these craving scenes as important sources of food history. No one has carried out examinations of food in either *Dr. Faustus* or *Measure for Measure*. *The Magnetic Lady* has received so little critical attention that it is

unsurprising that Placentia's non-food cravings have escaped close critical examination. Sid Ray's study on the politics of pregnancy in *The Duchess of Malfi* acknowledges the political importance of the Duchess's cravings: "her visibly pregnant body with its uncontrollable cravings and urges makes it impossible to forget that she has a sexually active and remarkably fertile female body."⁸ However, a focused examination of cravings and consumption in the play is outside the scope of his study. Robert Palter contributes an insightful reading of apricots as a "pregnancy test" in his ambitious and encyclopedic study of literary fruits, but he does not interpret or analyze his reading within the contexts of early modern English drama or culture.⁹ Finally, Lori Schroeder Haslem undertakes a valuable and detailed analysis of the "apricot" scene, the concept of disease, and the linkage of sexual and gastronomic appetites, contrasting the depiction of pregnancy in the play with that in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*.¹⁰ Gail Kern Paster briefly discusses perverse appetites in her discussion of Shakespeare's maidens, but her scope necessarily excludes pregnancy cravings.¹¹ None of these studies takes a material analysis of pregnancy cravings as its purpose.

The dearth of scholarly examinations of food and pregnancy in early modern drama constitutes a gap in food scholarship and a missed opportunity to learn more about the role of food in constructing identities of pregnant women. The clustering of these scenes within a time of great political change and upheaval (beginning approximately fifty years before the start of the English revolution and lasting for 40 years) makes this examination more pressing. As Puritan ideas about women's bodies gained momentum, they supplanted traditional, medieval notions of pregnancy as sacred. The resultant ideological climate proved increasingly difficult for pregnant women. By exploring the material significance of food – the ways in which an early modern English audience member would have understood and interpreted these cravings – we may

deepen our understanding of the plays and their historical contexts. Between 1588 and 1632, a narrative of ever-increasing contempt for female immoderation emerges within drama. This narrative suggests a cultural connection between pregnancy cravings and original sin and accompanies an increasing contempt toward pregnancy during this time period. While careful material consideration of the pregnancy cravings of the Duchess of Vanholt, Mistress Elbow, the Duchess of Malfi, and Mistress Placentia suggests the presence of simple and common pregnancy-related vitamin deficiencies to today's reader, these depictions of the uniquely vulnerable pregnant body participate in an escalating cultural narrative of female immoderation and original sin for early modern audiences.

The Duchess of Vanholt's Grapes

In Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (1588), the Duchess of Vanholt's pregnancy craving is acknowledged as normal – even expected. When visiting the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt, Faustus demonstrates his eagerness to fulfill a fantasy he expressed in Act 1, Scene 1: “I’ll have them ... / search all corners of the newfound world / For pleasant fruits and princely delicates” (1.1.84-87). He ranks “pleasant fruits” with gold and “orient pearl” as rare and sought-after objects one might need magic to procure. Upon seeing that the Duchess of Vanholt is pregnant, Faustus raises the notion of pregnancy craving generously and without disdain: “I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other. What is it, madam? Tell me, and you shall have it” (4.2.4-6). The Duchess responds, confessing her craving demurely but forthrightly and without shame: “Thanks, good Master Doctor. And, for I see your courteous intent to pleasure me, I will not hide from you the thing my heart desires. And were it now summer, as it is January and the dead time of the winter, I would desire no better meat than

a dish of ripe grapes” (4.2.7-11). The Duchess modestly suggests that she has considered hiding her craving for grapes, but decides based upon Faustus’s kindness that she will be honest. In Marlowe’s 1588 play, Faustus and the Duchess treat cravings as private, but not shameful, features of pregnancy.

Though grapes are nutritious and high in vitamins and trace minerals, the Duchess’s desire for them signals no particular pregnancy-related deficiency of which medical practitioners are currently aware. However, cravings for grapes must have been somewhat common, as Mary Fissell notes the belief that on a newborn baby, “[a] mark like a bunch of grapes ... results from a pregnant woman’s unfulfilled craving for grapes.”¹² Early modern dietary wisdom dictated that grapes, like most fresh fruit, must be eaten cautiously. According to Tobias Venner’s 1622 dietary:

But in the eating of grapes this caution must be observed, that neither the skinnes, nor the kernels of stones in them be swallowed downe, but onely the succulent pulpe, because they are unprofitable to the body: for by reason of their durtie and siccity of substance, they offend the stomake, receiue no alteration in the body at all, or very little, and also hinder the concoction and distribution of the medalline part of the Grape thorow the body, which is only nourishing.¹³

Venner’s advice involves carefully dissecting each grape to remove the peel and the seeds, which have an excessively dry substance, leaving only the nutritiously beneficial “succulent pulpe.”

The Duchess receives and eats the grapes eagerly and without ceremony, however, and she roundly praises their character: “Believe me, Master Doctor, they be the best grapes that e’er I tasted in my life before” (4.2.26-27). Simply put, Faustus wishes to provide her with grapes because she wants them, and the Duchess enthusiastically partakes. The fact that grapes

themselves as well as her manner of eating them go against dietary wisdom does not figure prominently into the scene as a means of condemning the Duchess. All of these things further suggest an absence of shame related to her craving.

The Duke interrupts the Duchess's praises, possibly with mild embarrassment at his wife's appetite, and the Duchess checks her enthusiasm in order to express her debt to Faustus for the fruit:

DUKE. Come, madam, let us in,
 Where you must well reward this learned man
 For the great kindness he hath showed to you.
 DUCHESS. And so I will, my lord, and whilst I live
 Rest beholding for this courtesy. (4.2.29-33)

The Duchess ceases her indulgence in the name of politeness, suggesting again that her craving is acknowledged as private but not inappropriate. Faustus and the Duke do not treat her or her appetite with any particular disdain. While the Duke and Duchess may simply be performing a routine courtesy in thanking Faustus, however, their words – that the Duchess must “well reward” Faustus and “rest beholding” for his courtesy – evoke Robin-the-clown's earlier remark that the lice on his body are “as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for my meat and drink” (1.4.28-29). This association provocatively demonstrates a real cultural discomfort with the liabilities of assimilating another's food into one's own body – and, in this case, into the developing body of the couple's child-to-be. Gifts of food, including Faustus's gift of grapes to the Duchess, seem to purchase some entitlement for the giver. Thus, the material implications of sharing food are omnipresent during this important scene. Even so, Marlowe permits the

Duchess to behave in a dignified way, and the characters who surround her respect her condition and her craving.

The treatment of the Duchess's craving as normal and acceptable is particularly meaningful in a play that otherwise treats food rather negatively. Three of the deadly sins in the pageant in Act 2, Scene 3 refer to an association with food. Envy is "begotten of a chimney sweeper and an oyster-wife" (2.3.129-130).¹⁴ Gluttony laments his "bare pension" of thirty meals and ten snacks per day (2.3.138) before detailing his lineage: "My grandfather was a gammon of bacon, my grandmother a hogshead of claret wine. My godfathers were these: Peter Pickle-herring and Martin Martlemas-beef. Oh, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer" (2.3.139-42). Pickle-herring, in addition to the food, referred to a clown or buffoon,¹⁵ and Martlemas-beef, slaughtered at the feast of St. Martin, was used to describe "a person whom one despises."¹⁶ In addition to rich foods, then, gluttony is descended from many of the foods used to express ridicule. Lechery also identifies himself in relation to food: "I am one that loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stockfish" (2.3.157-58). As discussed in Chapter 1, mutton refers to the common and strongly flavored meat of an adult (three- to five-year old) sheep,¹⁷ and was also a common euphemism for prostitute. Stockfish refers to cod that has been dried, without salt, to a moisture content of 15% "when they are stiff as a board and will keep well."¹⁸ An "ell" referred to a length of forty-five inches.¹⁹ Thus Lechery prefers even a small amount of rich food and illicit sex to quite a large amount of fried, dried fish. And in Act 5, Scene 2, at the First Scholar's insistence that Faustus is simply suffering from a surfeit, Faustus concurs, likening his years of sin to an overindulgence in food, "A surfeit of deadly sin that hath damned both body and soul" (5.2.11-12). In this context, that the Duchess's appetite for grapes is

not depicted as fraught with problems supports the notion that, in Marlowe's 1588 play, pregnancy craving is a normal, expected, and acceptable part of early modern pregnancy.

Mistress Elbow's Stewed Prunes

In contrast, Mistress Elbow's craving for stewed prunes in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) underlines her sexual appetite and immoral sexual behavior. The men in the play treat her craving as sordid and salacious. Pompey the tapster observes how Mistress Elbow entered the brothel where he works "great with child, and longing – saving your honour's reverence – for stewed prunes" (2.1.81-82). As prunes contain appreciable amounts of iron and vitamin A, they had nutritional benefits for pregnant women.²⁰ Pompey self-consciously apologizes to Angelo and Escalus, however, because stewed prunes had an objectionable association with brothels, as they were thought to offer protection against venereal disease.²¹ Pompey's apology suggests that prunes were a kind of forbidden fruit, inappropriate for polite conversation or consumption. This association also draws attention to the connection between Eve's sin of eating forbidden fruit and her biblical punishment for that sin – pain during childbirth. Mistress Elbow's pregnant, longing body manifests much of the story – and the blame – for original sin.

Pompey continues, "Sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish – a dish of some threepence, your honours have seen such dishes; they are not china dishes, but very good dishes" (83-87). His description of two stewed prunes suggests testicles, and fruit dishes ("very good dishes" but "not china dishes") were a euphemism for female genitals.²² Pompey uses double entendre to suggest that Mistress Elbow longs for more than the fruit she purports to crave, evoking a parallel between Mistress's Elbow's

pregnancy craving and her ardent sexual appetite. His description engenders the image of a pregnant prostitute who has wandered into a brothel with hope to meet a client, only to learn that the lone client was already engaged with a “dish of some threepence” – another cheap prostitute. Thus Mistress Elbow’s pregnancy craving suggests a deviant appetite for both food and sex.

Pompey explains the particulars of the situation which has impugned Mistress Elbow’s honesty: “Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you threepence again” (2.1.90-95). Pompey relates that Master Froth had purchased all but two of the prunes and had overpaid for them because Pompey didn’t have the threepence in change owed to Froth by the brothel. The economic situation that Pompey describes has clear implications and a simple solution: Mistress Elbow wanted the prunes (both the actual prunes and, by implication, those personally belonging to Master Froth) and Master Froth wanted the value of his threepence credit at the brothel. Threepence happens to be the very price cited for the “very good dishes,” or moderately priced prostitutes, to which and with whom Pompey is sure Escalus, Angelo’s advisor (for Angelo has long since abandoned the ridiculous litigants), is familiar. Therefore, Mistress Elbow’s exchange of sex for the longed-for prunes (in both senses) would have neatly settled all debts and desires: Master Froth receives his money’s worth while Mistress Elbow receives the fruit she craves (as well as Froth’s “prunes”). Mistress Elbow’s sense of propriety and self-control, if it ever existed, has been weakened by her pregnancy to the extent that she would trade sex for a snack.

But Escalus doesn’t quite understand what Pompey is saying:

ESCALUS. Now, sir, come on, what was done to Elbow’s wife, once

more?

POMPEY. Once, sir? There was nothing done to her once.

Pompey suggests that Mistress Elbow's visit to the brothel resulted in not just one, but multiple sexual acts. Pompey energetically continues to pursue his defamation of Elbow's pregnant wife: when Elbow characteristically misuses "respected" to mean "suspected," Pompey insists to Escalus, "By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all ... she was respected with him before he married with her" (2.1.148-53). Mistress Elbow's craving for stewed prunes, it seems, aggravates an already inappropriate and uncontrolled appetite for sex.

This connection between nutritional appetite and sexual appetite is borne out throughout the rest of *Measure for Measure*. Of the pregnant Juliet, Lucio says, "those that feed grow full ... even so her plenteous womb / Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry" (1.4.40-43). The "feeding" in his example broadens the aphorism to suggest that Juliet has been feeding, and growing full, sexually as well as nutritionally. Similarly but conversely, Lord Angelo's denial of his sexual appetite coincides with his denial of food: he "scarce confesses / That his blood flows, or that his appetite / Is more to bread than stone" (1.3.51-53). As John Stachniewski points out, "Angelo's virtue is based on the denial that he has appetites and therefore a self-ignorant and socially dangerous denial of his common humanity."²³ Nancy A. Gutierrez presents a similar view.²⁴ And sure enough, when Angelo demands Isabella's virginity in exchange for her brother's life, he commands her, "Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite" (2.4.161). His self-denial has sharpened his sexual appetite in the way that abstinence from food sharpens hunger. But whereas Angelo's fasting and denial is depicted as unnecessary and damaging, Mistress Elbow's satisfaction of her craving for prunes is grotesque and aberrant. The double-standard of which Gutierrez writes –

that dramatists depict fasting as unnecessarily excessive for men but appropriate for women – applies here too.²⁵

Lucio boldly (and dishonestly) attempts to defame the Duke by questioning his adherence to dietary laws while simultaneously censuring the company he kept at meals and in bed: “The Duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on Fridays. He’s not past it yet, and, I say to thee, he would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt of brown bread and garlic” (3.1.412-15). Mutton, as mentioned earlier, refers both to the meat of an adult sheep and to prostitutes.²⁶ To mouth with the beggar who smells of brown bread and garlic suggests both supping with said beggar and kissing her. Therefore, Lucio accuses the absent duke of indiscriminate dietary and sexual behavior. Finally, Lucio associates his own dietary restraint with sexual restraint. He confesses to the Duke: “I am fain to dine and sup with water and bran; I dare not for my head fill my belly; one fruitful meal would set me to’t” (4.3.143-45). Bran, the husks which are removed from grain in order to produce flour, is usually eaten for its nutritional value rather than flavor.²⁷ Additionally, water and bran were once thought to suppress lechery.²⁸ Lucio expresses his willingness to eat ascetically so that his overindulgence in food does not incite him to lust for the “pretty Isabella” (142). Again, appetites for food and sex are inextricably connected.

All of these examples demonstrate that, in *Measure for Measure*, the characters’ appetites for food are strongly associated with their appetites for sex. In the case of Mistress Elbow, who never even appears on stage, a powerful and morally questionable longing for stewed prunes represents everything the audience knows about her character. Her craving for this forbidden fruit emphasizes her pregnant body as grotesque and aberrant. According to Fissell, the positive view of the womb that had been perpetuated in vernacular texts during the sixteenth century began to be challenged from about 1603.²⁹ She describes how the lusty womb “stirs up seed,

blends it with menstrual blood,” and makes a “monstrous being.”³⁰ The presence of the lusty, unclean Mistress Elbow in the 1604 *Measure for Measure*, and her juxtaposition with “pretty Isabella,” then, is more than merely coincidental. Mistress Elbow’s craving suggests that pregnancy has exacerbated a nature that tended toward sexual excess. Pompey’s story implies that her consumption of prunes and illicit sex – both forbidden to a married woman – fuel the creation of a monster in her womb.

The Duchess of Malfi’s Apricots

In Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), the pregnant Duchess devours the servant Bosola’s gift of apricots and thereby unintentionally induces her own labor. In Act 2, Scene 1, Bosola says he has begun to suspect the Duchess’s pregnancy due to her recent physical symptoms. He confesses that he has devised a plot which he hopes may reveal the truth: “I have a trick may chance discover it, / A pretty one: I have bought some apricots, / The first our spring yields” (70-72). Bosola does not indicate how or why he thinks apricots will reveal the Duchess’s pregnancy; Webster seems to assume that the audience understands an association between pregnant women and apricots.

Though early modern medical practitioners did not acknowledge the unique nutritional needs of pregnant women, doctors now understand apricots as secondary only to animal liver in their ability to boost hemoglobin production and thus treat iron-deficiency anemia.³¹ Iron-deficiency anemia is a common ailment of pregnancy, occurring at a rate of 10% even among today’s well-nourished women in developed countries.³² The condition is caused by insufficient iron intake, as the iron requirements of women double during pregnancy.³³ The diets of pregnant women have historically been characterized by both undernutrition and malnutrition, and both of

these were exacerbated by seasonal variation.³⁴ Therefore, the apricot craving of which Webster writes may well have been endemic to British wintertime pregnancy. It was not viewed as a particularly wholesome fruit, however; according to Venner, apricots

are cold and moist in the second degree; they yeeld a cold, crude, and unwholesome nourishment; they ingender wind, make the blood waterish, and subject to putrefication. ... I hold it best for such as respect their health, and can subject their appetite, utterly to eschew the use of these and such like hoarie and quickly perishing fruites, that fill the body with crude, phlegmaticall, and corruptible humours.³⁵

Venner suggests that self-control should prevail over apricots. Additionally, Haslem argues that, in Webster's day, the apricot tended to be linked with the apple, "an association that sometimes invited speculation that the apricot was the mythical forbidden fruit of Eden."³⁶ The scene characterizes the Duchess's craving – or, at least, Bosola's opinion of that craving – for apricots as a humiliating and grotesque feature of her maternal body and bespeaks a waning tolerance for the features of pregnancy that were commonly viewed as normal and healthy a mere 25 years before.

Bosola's expectations that the Duchess will respond strongly to the fruit prove accurate. When he presents his apricots to the Duchess, she reacts with interest and enthusiasm:

BOSOLA. I have a present for Your Grace.

DUCHESS. For me, sir?

BOSOLA. Apricots, madam.

DUCHESS. Oh, sir, where are they?

I have heard of none to-year. (2.1.134-35)

Bosola responds to her eagerness in an aside, hopeful that his plot to confirm her pregnancy is working: “Good. Her color rises” (133). Her enthusiasm confirms his suspicion that she is pregnant. The Duchess accepts the apricots and eagerly begins to eat them: “Indeed, I thank you. They are / wondrous fair ones. / What an unskillful fellow is our gardener! / We shall have none this month” (2.1.133-36). Indeed, though King Henry VIII’s gardener brought the apricot to England in 1542, the fruit was not successfully grown in the country until the eighteenth century because of the unfavorably cool climate.³⁷ Of course, the play’s setting is Italy, but the English audience would likely have associated the fruit with their own growing seasons. According to Palter, apricots do not ripen in England until August.³⁸ Ripeness has always been an issue for those who cultivate apricots, as they acquire their color before the fruit is finished developing; if they are picked too soon they will never ripen.³⁹ Therefore, the audience may well have questioned either the origin or the ripeness of Bosola’s apricots, and would likely have been concerned about the Duchess’s enthusiasm for them.

Bosola comments on the Duchess’s indelicate consumption of the fruit by suggesting she peel the apricots in order to enjoy them more properly: “Will not your grace pare them?” (137). But the Duchess insists that she likes to eat the entire apricot, peel and all: “No, they taste of musk, methinks. Indeed they do” (138). Musk is a glandular secretion of the musk deer that was diluted and mixed with rosewater to flavor pies and other foods through the seventeenth century in England.⁴⁰ In her eagerness, the Duchess is unwilling to forego even the peels of the fruit she craves, suggesting that they have been treated with a popular and valuable (if not very attractive to the modern palate) flavoring. Bosola responds, “I wish your grace had pared ’em. ... I forgot to tell you the knave gard’ner, / Only to raise his profit by them the sooner, / Did ripen them in horse dung” (139-43). Bosola suggests to the Duchess that he she is eagerly devouring apricots

tainted with fecal matter. Whether or not he is telling the truth about the horse dung used to ripen the fruit, Bosola brings up the issue to humiliate the Duchess for her appetite.

The Duchess seems unfazed by Bosola's suggestion, however, and dismisses him as jesting. When Antonio refuses a taste of the fruit (2.1.144-45), the Duchess responds knowingly and gratefully, "Sir, you are loath / To rob us of our dainties" (146-147). Unlike Bosola, who simultaneously revels in and recoils from the Duchess's eagerness for the fruit, Antonio, as her secret husband and the father of her children, wants her to have as much of the coveted food as possible.⁴¹ As the Duchess continues to eat, Bosola begins to make what seem to be *non sequitur* comments about grafting, a practice used by early modern gardeners in order to cultivate sought-after fruits:

BOSOLA. 'Tis a pretty art, this grafting.

DUCHESS. 'Tis so. A bett'ring of nature.

BOSOLA. To make a pippin grow upon a crab,

A damson on a blackthorn[.] (148-151)

Grafting involves placing a limb or sprout of the desired plant onto the stalk of an established plant. In Bosola's example, he marvels that a pippin apple, desirable because of its ability to keep through the winter,⁴² could grow upon a crabapple tree, known for producing small, bitter fruit.⁴³ He goes on to marvel that a damson, a plum coveted for drying and honored as a delicacy in Britain, could grow on a blackthorn, a thorny bush with plumlike fruits.⁴⁴ Since Bosola makes these comments about grafting as his certainty that the Duchess is pregnant grows, his words carry interesting implications. Despite the fact that her brothers have hired him to watch the Duchess in order to protect their (and thus also her) fortune and bloodline, Bosola implies that *she* is the crabapple plant and the blackthorn, nourishing a form of life to which she is inferior.

Knowing nothing about the identity of her partner, Bosola assumes that the pregnant Duchess is worth less than the man with whom she has had illicit sex. His attitudes evince both his own beliefs and those of a society that was increasingly skeptical of women, their biological processes, and, most of all, pregnancy.

Bosola continues to marvel at the Duchess's consumption of the apricots, taking a perverse pleasure in his own disgust: "How greedily she eats them!" (151). As the Duchess expresses her gratitude to Bosola, however, she begins to feel ill: "I thank you, Bosola. They were right good ones, / If they do not make me sick. ... This green fruit and my stomach are not friends / How they swell me!" (156-59). According to Gélis, unripe fruit posed a particular danger to pregnant women by triggering premature labor: "In the supply gap just before the harvest, when barns and purses were both empty, orchard fruits could be a boon; but while green fruit could satisfy hunger, it was highly dangerous to women who ate too much of it, without taking the precaution of cooking it first. 'Fluxes' were always to be feared; it was in summer when miscarriages were most frequent."⁴⁵ Since Bosola's apricots were "the first our spring yields" (2.1.72), procured at least a month before the Duchess expected her gardener to produce apricots (135-36), her concern is that the green, or unripe, fruit has caused sufficient digestive upset to trigger labor. As Bosola unsympathetically admonishes her, "Nay, you are too much swelled already" (160), the Duchess laments her physical state: "Oh, I am in an extreme cold sweat" (161). Sid Ray argues that the Duchess's "uncontrollable cravings and urges makes it impossible to forget that she has a sexually active and remarkably fertile female body."⁴⁶ Paralleling the replacement of the comforting Virgin Mary with the figure of Eve in vernacular literature, the Duchess's discomfort highlights the "role of Eve in causing all women to suffer in childbirth."⁴⁷ These beliefs situate childbirth and, by extension, pregnancy, as punishment for

female sin rather than as a socially and culturally valuable state. The bodily needs caused by the sinful state of the female reproductive cycle placed further strain on a society already challenged by hunger and thus further fueled the cultural fervor against pregnant women.

In the commotion, Antonio fears the Duchess's secret has been revealed: "Oh, my most trusty Delio, we are lost! / I fear she's fall'n in labor, and there's left / No time for her remove" (165-67). Bosola is satisfied by the Duchess's apparent physical discomfort, and his observations cement his suspicion that the Duchess is pregnant: "So, so: there's no question but her tetchiness and most vulturous eating of the apricots are apparent signs of breeding" (2.2.1-3). Bosola characterizes the Duchess's demeanor as "[e]asily irritated or made angry; quick to take offence; short-tempered; peevish, irritable; testy"⁴⁸ and likens her appetite for apricots to that of a carnivorous bird which eagerly circles its dying prey. Bosola's emphasis on the Duchess's pregnant body as aberrant and grotesque provides further evidence for the deterioration of the status of pregnant women in early modern England.

Outside of the apricots scene, references to food in *The Duchess of Malfi* are plentiful and varied, but ultimately serve to illustrate the reduction and submission of the Duchess to her reprehensible bothers. Bosola brings up food frequently and often with disdain. He says of the Cardinal: "He and his brother are like plum trees that grow crooked over standing pools; they are rich and o'erladen with fruit, but none but crows, [mag]pies, and caterpillars feed on them" (1.1.49-52). The men are blessed with plenty, but surrounded in unpleasantness such that their resources are not available to anyone but society's crows, pies, and caterpillars.⁴⁹ To Castruchio and the Old Lady, Bosola claims, quite graphically: "I would sooner eat a dead pigeon, taken from the soles of the feet of one sick of the plague, than kiss one of you fasting" (2.1.38-40). And by way of explanation for his disparagements of women, Bosola explains that "[t]he orange

tree bears ripe and green fruit and blossoms all together” (2.2.15-16). He thinks it is fitting to mention women’s “frailties” (presumably associated with green fruit) along with their virtues (or ripe fruit and blossoms). And upon learning of the Duchess’s pregnancy, Ferdinand shouts in his rage, “Rhubarb, oh, for rhubarb / To purge this choler!” (2.5.12-13). In sixteenth-century England, rhubarb was eaten only in a medicinal context, though as sugar became more widely available English cookery books gradually began to list recipes for pies and tarts.⁵⁰ Here, Bosola and Ferdinand use references to food to express disdain and emotion. This overwhelmingly negative treatment of food underlines Webster’s handling of the Duchess’s apricots as abnormal and humiliating: even pleasant, nutritious foods in *The Duchess of Malfi* indicate social and familial malfunction.

Ferdinand takes his food imagery even further, though. Of the Duchess and her unknown lover, Ferdinand says:

I would have their bodies
 Burnt in a coalpit, with the ventage stopped,
 That their cursed smoke might not ascent to heaven;
 Or dip the sheets they lie in in pitch or sulfur,
 Wrap them in’t, and then light them like a match;
 Or else to boil their bastard to a cullis,
 An give’t his lecherous father, to renew
 The sin of his back. (2.5.67-74)

Ferdinand imagines burning the bodies of his sister and her lover in a coal pit, then envisions burning them in their bed sheets before proceeding to a fantasy in which he boils their baby until it has disintegrated into a broth so he may feed it to the Duchess’s lover and thus fuel further

lovemaking between them. The Duchess then uses imagery to imagine herself as food for her unrelenting brothers: “[w]ith such a pity men preserve alive / Pheasants and quails when they are not fat enough / To be eaten” (3.5.112-14). When she believes that her children are dead, the Duchess considers first suffocation herself by consumption of burning coals and then starvation as means of killing herself: “Portia, I’ll new-kindle thy coals again, / And revive the rare and almost dead example / Of a loving wife” (4.1.72-74); “The church enjoins fasting; / I’ll starve myself to death” (4.1.75-76). She imagines ending her life through her own volition by ingesting dangerous material and then by foregoing all food. In his cruel attempts to disorient the Duchess into going crazy, Bosola answers her query of “Who am I” (4.2.121) with a description of her flesh as food: “What’s this flesh? A little crudded milk, fantastical puff paste.” (4.2.123-24). He suggests that she is made of curdled milk and puff pastry, that her body is “weaker than those paper prisons boys use to keep flies in” (125-26). Shortly thereafter, the Duchess stretches the metaphor of her body as food: “In my last will I have not much to give; / A many hungry guests have fed upon me. / Thine will be a poor reversion” (4.2.195-97). She concludes her wishes with instructions that Bosola is “[t]o tell my brothers when I am laid out, / They then may feed in quiet” (4.2.233-34). In this play, the Duchess’s pregnancy craving is depicted as humiliating as it reveals her forbidden (by her brothers) association with Antonio. The Duchess, whose indulgence in forbidden fruit – the unripe apricot, which evokes the apple of Eden – during her pregnancy led to the loss of her family and happiness, finds her once-fertile body reduced metaphorically to food for her brothers.

added to bind the mixture closely together.”⁵³ Therefore, Placentia might have easily scraped such a substance from her chamber walls. Soap-ashes were used in forming lye in soap-making,⁵⁴ and loam refers to clay or ground soil.⁵⁵ Clearly, whether the issue is greensickness or something else, Placentia is not well.

The gossip Polish recognizes these symptoms as something other than greensickness, as she explains to the oblivious Dr. Rut:

POLISH. The gentlewoman, I do fear, is leavened.

RUT. Leavened? What’s that?

POLISH. Puffed, blown, and’t please your worship.

RUT. What! Dar, by darker? What is blown? Puffed? Speak English –

POLISH. Tainted, and’t please you, some do call it.

She swells and swells so with it – (2.3.8-10).

Polish compares Placentia to a bread dough that has been leavened with a substance that has caused it to rise and expand in size (in the metaphor, this would have been either baking soda or yeast, but of course Polish intends to suggest semen). The description of Placentia as “puffed” and “blown” suggests a lack of purpose, or emptiness, to her (illicit) procreation. Polish’s knowledge does not seem to be garnered from much insight, though, as even the Boy in the Act 3 Chorus explains that “[t]he stream of the argument threatened her being with child from the very beginning, for it presented her in the first of the second Act with some apparent note of infirmity or defect” (6-9). He characterizes Placentia’s pregnancy as knowable through her deficiencies.

Placentia’s tendency to “cranch,” or eat, such substances as coal, lime, hair, soap-ash, and loam indicates the presence of what medical practitioners now understand as an ailment common to malnourished pregnant women: “The craving for unusual substances that have no nutritional

value is often referred to as pica. ... [I]t seems to occur more characteristically among young children, women in the childbearing cycle and in groups suffering from dearth of food or from deficiency in any important nutrient.”⁵⁶ Pica is often associated with low socioeconomic status, maternal malnutrition, and iron deficiency.⁵⁷ Though people of Jonson’s time were not familiar with the causes of pica, they were familiar with its symptoms. Jacques Guillemeau, a seventeenth-century French obstetrician, wrote that “Some women have an appetite so depraved, because of some bitter or salty humour which is contained in the stomach lining – such as eating *coal*, chalk, *ashes* or uncooked salt fish which have not even been soaked, or drinking verjuice, vinegar or even wine-lees – that it is impossible to stop them tasting and eating them.”⁵⁸ Guillemeau characterizes the consumption of non-nutritive substances as indications of a “depraved” appetite and humoral imbalance.

In his 1621 tract *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton details “Stories of Possession,” including one account of “Katherine Gualter,” who

had such strange passions and convulsions, three men could not sometimes hold her; she purged a live eel, which he saw, a foot and a half long, and touched himself; but the eel afterwards vanished; she vomited some twenty-four pounds of fulsome stuff of all colours, twice a day for fourteen days; and after that she voided great balls of *hair*, pieces of wood, pigeon’s dung, parchment, goose dung, *coals*; and after them two pound of pure blood, and then again *coals* and stones, of which some had inscriptions, bigger than a walnut, some of them pieces of glass, brass, etc., besides paroxysms of laughing, weeping, and ecstasies, etc. ... They could do no good on her by physic, but left her to the clergy.⁵⁹

This passage demonstrates the exaggerated, monstrous way in which women with pica were likely to be perceived. Rather than simple depravity or a medical condition, Burton attributes the cravings to demonic possession and writes that the (unfortunate, malnourished) lady Katherine had to be left to the clergy rather than physicians. These accounts suggest that the consumption of nonfood items was feared as a monstrous and revolting condition.

In Act 4, Placentia, the young noblewoman with a puzzlingly depraved and monstrous appetite, is revealed instead to be the daughter of the gossip Polish. Pleasance, Polish's former supposed daughter and Placentia's graceful waiting-woman, is really Lady Loadstone's niece. Pleasance and Placentia were switched at birth. The audience can finally rationalize Placentia's grotesque condition with her station – the puzzlingly depraved cravings of a once-supposed noblewoman finally make sense because she is revealed to be the daughter of a servingwoman. According to Ostovich, "Conception itself, according to medical theory since Galen, is a sign of female sexual pleasure, usually moderated within marriage; conception outside marriage suggests the excessive pleasure in sexuality assumed to run rampant in whores and other bastard-bearers."⁶⁰ To engage in excessive pleasure is to become synonymous with "whores" and "bastard-bearers." The audience is assured that Placentia, no longer a noblewoman and instead a simple servant switched at birth, will receive her just rewards: a life of servitude and single motherhood. Ostovich observes that "Placentia's fate rests entirely at the discretion of the patriarchy that condemns her as worthless. ... The mothers are disempowered and cast down, if not out. In the patriarchal victory that ends the play, their final place is simply not important."⁶¹ Polish, who laments the inevitable fate of her biological daughter, angrily accosts Nurse Keep for revealing the secret of the switched infants: "Thou art a traitor to me, / An Eve, the apple, and the serpent too" (4.4.5-6). Polish's words triangulate the components of original sin as she frantically

attempts to shift the blame for the events away from her daughter. But in insulting the nurse by evoking the figure of Eve, the apple she craved, and the serpent that tempted her, Polish ultimately, if inadvertently, calls attention to Placentia, her grotesque appetite, and her rampant sexuality.

Between 1588 and 1632, a narrative of increasing contempt for female appetite emerges within the drama. This narrative suggests a cultural association between pregnancy cravings and original sin and accompanies an increasing scrutiny of pregnancy during this time period. Where a material analysis of the foods being craved signifies a vitamin deficiency to today's reader, to an early modern reader they eventually came to signify moral depravity, original sin, and monstrosity. An examination of food in these plays suggests the precarious but complex position of pregnant women in pre-revolution early modern England.

In *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus*, Faustus and the Duchess of Vanholt treat pregnancy cravings as private, but not shameful, features of early modern procreation. In contrast, Mistress Elbow's craving for stewed prunes in *Measure for Measure* draws attention to the connection between Eve's sin of eating forbidden fruit and her biblical punishment for that sin – pain during childbirth. Mistress Elbow's pregnant, longing body embodies the blame for original sin, suggesting a deviant appetite for both food and sex. Pompey's story implies that her consumption of prunes and illicit sex – both forbidden to a married woman – fuel the creation of a monster in her womb. In *The Duchess of Malfi*, the Duchess's craving for apricots is depicted as a humiliating and grotesque feature of her maternal body. Webster's treatment of this scene suggests an increasing contempt for the features of pregnancy that were viewed as normal and healthy a mere 25 years before. The scene situates pregnancy as punishment for female sin rather

than as a socially and culturally valuable state. Bosola's emphasis on the Duchess's pregnant body as aberrant and grotesque further suggests a deterioration of the status of pregnant women in early modern England. The Duchess, whose indulgence in forbidden fruit during her pregnancy led to the loss of her family and happiness, finds her once-fertile body reduced metaphorically to food for her brothers. Finally, in Jonson's *The Magnetic Lady*, the secretly pregnant Mistress Placentia Steel eats coal, lime, hair, soap-ash, and loam. Historically, the characterization of the consumption of non-nutritive substances was read as indicative of "depraved" appetites and humoral imbalances. When she is revealed to be a simple servant instead of a noblewoman, the audience can finally make sense of Placentia's grotesque – even demon-possessed – body.

These depictions of the pregnant body participate in a narrative that increasingly emphasizes original sin. Ever more critical portrayals of pregnant women both reflect a cultural phenomenon and function as a kind of scapegoat, or a worst-case-scenario that society might use as a basis of comparison. Such depictions would normalize some craving behaviors (those interpreted as less intense, severe, or monstrous than each craving depicted) while casting the rest of them as monstrous and problematic. In this way, the narrative could also serve to create more space for acceptable behavior. Compared to Placentia, the Duchess of Malfi appears normal; compared to the Duchess of Malfi, Mistress Elbow appears normal.

The escalation of the narrative simultaneously hints at a deepening crisis for the early modern pregnant woman. While the Duchess of Vanholt's grapes in 1588 do not reveal a nutritional deficiency, Mistress Quickly's 1604 longing for prunes implies a need for iron. The Duchess of Malfi's 1613 longing for apricots blatantly suggests an iron deficiency. By 1632, Placentia's clear affliction of pregnancy-induced pica suggests a more severe nutritional

deficiency. This trajectory implies that as the archetype of the pregnant woman became more socially unacceptable, her consumption of foodstuffs came under increased scrutiny while her ability to meet the increased nutritional demands of her body became more difficult. The historical situation of this narrative before the English revolution and subsequent Enlightenment elevates the importance of the developing ideas about pregnancy and food. These plays work through ideas that would directly underpin the assumptions that scientists and doctors made about women's bodies as they developed the theories about pregnancy that evolved into today's medicine. Thus, by exploring food's material significance – the ways in which an early modern English audience member would have understood and interpreted these cravings – we deepen our understanding of the far-reaching cultural phenomena these plays represent.

Notes to Chapter 3

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- ¹ Unless otherwise noted, references to *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* are from Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 245-286.
- ² Unless otherwise noted, references to *The Duchess of Malfi* are from John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi, English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 1749-1832.
- ³ Unless otherwise noted, references to *The Magnetic Lady* are from Ben Jonson, *The Magnetic Lady*, ed. Peter Happé (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
- ⁴ Monika Karpinska, "Early Modern Dramatizations of Virgins and Pregnant Women," *Studies in English Literature* 50.2 (Spring 2010): 438-439.
- ⁵ Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 46-47.
- ⁶ Jacques Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991), 83.
- ⁷ Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, 58.
- ⁸ Sid Ray, "'So Troubled with the Mother': The politics of Pregnancy in *The Duchess of Malfi*," *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, ed. Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn McPherson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 21.
- ⁹ Robert Palter, *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots and Other Literary Fruits* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 274-276.

¹⁰ Lori Schroeder Haslem, “‘Troubled with the Mother’: Longings, Purgings, and the Maternal Body in ‘Bartholomew Fair’ and ‘The Duchess of Malfi,’” *Modern Philology* 92.4 (1995): 451-58.

¹¹ Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring The Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 95.

¹² Fissel, *Vernacular Bodies*, 65.

¹³ Tobias Venner, *VIA RECTA AD VITAM LONGAM, OR A PLAINE PHILOSOPHICALL DISCOVRSE OF THE Nature, faculties, and effects, of all such things as by way of nourishments, and Dieteticall ovseruations, make for the preseruatiō of Health, with their iust applications vnto euery age, constitution of body, and time of YEARE* (London, 1622), 120. From the Library of Dr. and Mrs. John Talbot Gernon, The Lilly Library, The University of Indiana.

¹⁴ An oyster-wife is a woman who sells oysters: “oyster-wife, n. and adj.,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

¹⁵ “pickle-herring, n.,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

¹⁶ “Martinmas, n.,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

¹⁷ Alan Davidson and Tom Jaine, eds., “mutton,” *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 528.

¹⁸ Davidson and Jaine, “stockfish,” 757.

¹⁹ “ell, n.1,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

²⁰ Lulu G. Graves, "Dried Fruits: Their Values and How to Use Them," *The American Journal of Nursing* 35.3 (March 1935): 234.

²¹ Gordon Williams, "stewed prunes," *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone Press, 1994), 1314.

²² Katharine Eisaman Maus, Note to line 185, *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008), 2059.

²³ John Stachniewski, "Angelo's Appetite," *Notes and Queries* 28.2 (April 1981): 136.

²⁴ Nancy A. Gutierrez, "Double Standard in the Flesh: Gender, Fasting, and Power in English Renaissance Drama," *Disorderly Eaters: Texts in Self-Emopwerment*, ed. Lilian R. Furst and Peter W. Graham (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 81. Gutierrez writes of Angelo, "This imbalance in living, the ignoring of a vital part of being human, results in Angelo's becoming a danger to himself and the community, as the realization that he has passions causes his attempted seduction of Isaella, a sign of his loss of self-government and his abuse of Vienna's government" (81).

²⁵ Gutierrez, "Double Standard," 79-82.

²⁶ See note 17.

²⁷ Davidson and Jaine, "bran," 94.

²⁸ Katharine Eisaman Maus, Note to line 144, *Measure for Measure*, by William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008) 2092.

²⁹ Fissel, *Vernacular Bodies*, 53.

³⁰ Fissel, *Vernacular Bodies*, 65.

³¹ Frederick Tice, *Practice of Medicine, Volume VI* (Hagerstown, MD: W.F. Prior Company, 1922), 809.

³² Geoffrey Chamberlain, "Medical Problems In Pregnancy: II," *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 302.6788 (Jun. 1, 1991): 1327.

³³ Chamberlain, "Medical Problems In Pregnancy," 1327.

³⁴ Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, 83.

³⁵ Venner, *VIA RECTA*, 114. It should also be noted that Titania's use of the fruit in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests that it was seen as decadent, if not healthy.

³⁶ Haslem, "Troubled with the Mother," 454-55. She further suggests that "Webster introduces the apricot-eating episode in order to invogorate several negative stereotypes about the pregnant female" (455).

³⁷ Davidson and Jaine, "apricot," 30.

³⁸ Palter, *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots*, 272.

³⁹ Davidson and Jaine, "apricot," 30.

⁴⁰ Davidson and Jaine, "musk," 525.

⁴¹ Haslem argues, though, that Antonio's "relative silence in this scene suggests that he too is amazed by – and, of course, nervous about – the Duchess's hearty eating" (454).

⁴² Davidson and Jaine, "apple," 28,

⁴³ Davidson and Jaine, "crabapple," 222.

⁴⁴ Davidson and Jaine, "damson," 242.

⁴⁵ Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, 83.

⁴⁶ Ray, "So Troubled with the Mother," 21.

⁴⁷ Fissel, *Vernacular Bodies*, 46.

⁴⁸ "tetchy, techy, a.," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

⁴⁹ Bosola would seem to insult himself with this line.

⁵⁰ Davidson and Jaine, "rhubarb," 662.

⁵¹ "green sickness, green-sickness," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

⁵² "small coal," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000). See entry 2c.

⁵³ "lime, n.1," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000). See entry 2c.

⁵⁴ "soap-ashes" *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

⁵⁵ "loam, n.," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

⁵⁶ Moni Nag, "Beliefs and Practices about Food during Pregnancy: Implications for Maternal Nutrition," *Economic and Political Weekly* 29.37 (Sept. 10, 1994): 2432. The author continues, "The compulsion to eat earth including clay or other types of soil (geophagia) by pregnant women is very widespread."

⁵⁷ Simon Langley-Evans, *Nutrition: a lifespan approach*, (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 67.

⁵⁸ Qtd. in Gélis, *History of Childbirth*, 57, emphasis added.

⁵⁹ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), 201. The description is in “Causes of Melancholy,” Subsection II.

⁶⁰ Helen Ostovich, “The Appropriation of Pleasure in *The Magnetic Lady*,” *Studies in English Literature* 34.2 (Spring 1994): 431. Ostovich also argues that “[t]he very idea of women taking control of their own sexuality and procreativity threatens the dominant male order with illegitimate heirs that might topple the established rule” (425).

⁶¹ Ostovich, “The Appropriation of Pleasure,” 440-441.

Chapter 4

Consumption, Justice, and Human Flesh

in *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

In *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Timon of Athens* (circa 1607), and *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), the main characters confront issues of justice through the consumption of human flesh by cannibalism, starvation (self-consumption), or both. In *Titus Andronicus*, Titus attempts to achieve revenge for the gruesome events perpetuated between himself and Tamora. He tricks her into eating “the flesh that she herself hath bred” (5.3.61), effectively burying Chiron and Demetrius within the body of the woman who gave birth to them. Lucius, decreeing Aaron’s punishment at the end of the play, orders the Moor’s body to be starved: “let him stand, and rave, and cry for food” (5.3.179). In *Timon of Athens*, Apemantus denounces the metaphorical cannibalism at Timon’s house and refuses to participate, declaring “No, I eat not lords” (1.1.206) and contrasting himself with those who “dip their meat in one man’s blood” (1.2.39-40). When he cannot pay his creditors, Timon abjures society and any food but water and roots dug from the earth, ensuring that there is less of his formerly well-fed body for the citizens of Athens to cannibalize. Finally, in Heywood’s *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Mistress Anne renounces food as a means of penance for adultery: “So to my deathbed, for from this sad hour /

I never will nor eat, nor drink, nor taste / Of any cates that may preserve my life” (16.102-104).¹

She starves her adulterous body in a kind of self-consumption and is ultimately allowed to die surrounded by her reconciled husband, family, and community.

In this final chapter, I explore consumptive extremes in early modern drama – cannibalism and starvation. Cannibalism represents the epitome of unrestrained consumption; starvation, the body’s consumption of its own flesh, indicates the epitome of restraint. United by their material destruction and erosion of the human body, these forms of consumption appear in early modern tragedy alongside situations of justice, the restoration of (or attempt to restore) balance after an act of wrongdoing, including revenge, repentance, and redemption. I selected Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens* for their descriptions of cannibalism and imagery of starvation; I discuss these plays with Thomas Heywood’s *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, which focuses on starvation and uses the imagery of cannibalism. Several literary scholars have examined appetite and food in these plays. Joan Fitzpatrick investigates appetite in *Titus Andronicus*, comparing Shakespeare’s depiction of the Goths with early modern English descriptions of the Irish.² She also explores the play’s food in *Food in Shakespeare*, where she argues that Titus makes a “profane feast” out of the heads of Chiron and Demetrius, interrogating the connection between profane consumption and foreign influence.³ Additionally, David Frederik examines the connections between appetite, the open mouth, and masculinity in Julie Taymor’s 1999 film *Titus*.⁴ The food of *Timon of Athens* has received somewhat less critical attention. Tracy Thong examines the banquet course (dessert) in the play, arguing for its social significance to people of all economic levels.⁵ Fitzpatrick also considers the play’s food, engaging in a material analysis of the specific foodstuffs mentioned and exploring the relationship between food, sex, and revenge in the play.⁶ She concludes that the play ends with

“the prospect of men continuing to feed upon each other.”⁷ Robert S. Miola addresses the implications of food in this play, arguing that Shakespeare portrays excess as a judgment on the indiscriminate and unruly nature of Athenian democracy and its moral decadence.⁸ Fitzpatrick argues that in both *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens*, “food becomes distinctly exotic: a vehicle for murder or punishment rather than a source of nourishment.”⁹ Margaret B. Bryan argues that food is symbolically linked with erotic love and lust in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*.¹⁰ Nancy A. Gutierrez interrogates the connections between fasting, exorcism, and Puritanism in the play, arguing for a parallel between seducers of women and demons and suggesting that Anne’s starvation is simultaneously an act of religious salvation and political resistance.¹¹ Christopher Frey and Leanore Lieblen assert, somewhat problematically, that Anne’s choice to starve herself is a powerful act of resistance against a patriarchal society that uses food and eating as forms of control.¹² Reina Green explores the connection between the female appetite for speech (“greedy ear”) and for food, arguing that Anne’s adultery is caused by her aural openness and reformed by her oral closure.¹³ My work is indebted to the important work of these scholars; however, the material significance of cannibalism and/or starvation has not been a central concern of any of their studies.

Though it is perhaps not surprising that such extreme situations would appear in early modern tragedy, the meaning of consuming another human body or of refusing sustenance and causing the body to consume itself has real physical consequences that would have carried unique meaning for the early modern playgoer or reader. By investigating the ways in which an early modern English audience member may have understood and interpreted these instances of cannibalism and starvation, we may deepen our understanding of the plays and their historical contexts. I am concerned first with what a close reading and material analysis can reveal about

cannibalism and starvation in these plays. I will examine the specific foodstuffs mentioned, but I will also expand my methodology to look at the material meanings and physiological consequences of these decisions. If food and drink are important conduits of cultural meaning, then the situations surrounding the consumption of human flesh have the opportunity to be intensely significant. A material analysis of the foods at the extremes of consumption – feasting, cannibalism, fasting, and starving – reveals how early modern dramatists and audiences perceived appetite as a tool for revenge, repentance, and redemption.

Cannibalism and Vengeance: *Titus Andronicus*

In *Titus Andronicus* (1594), arguably Shakespeare's least subtle treatment of consumption, Titus feeds Tamora a pastry made of her sons' bones, blood, and heads after a series of increasingly cruel and merciless maneuvers between the two adversaries, including the rape of Titus's daughter Lavinia by Tamora's sons. Titus captures and prepares the deviant bodies of Chiron and Demetrius, who have consumed Lavinia sexually, in order to feed them to the deviant and "ravenous" body of their mother. By re-assimilating the men into the body from which they were born, Titus performs a horrifying burial ritual in which he punishes the mother and obliterates the very existence of the sons. This act of revenge is shocking and dramatic, but it is ultimately not a successful execution of justice through consumption.

However, the play's imagery of bodily consumption appears long before the Act 5 events in which Titus exacts his revenge.¹⁴ In Act 1, Scene 1, Lucius says of Tamora's son Alarbus, who is "marked" for sacrifice: "Away with him, and make a fire straight, / And with our swords upon a pile of wood / Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed" (127-29). Titus's sons exit to chop up and burn the body of Alarbus, and thus the consumption of human flesh which

begins the play's dramatic conflict – Titus's refusal to show mercy to the pleading Tamora, who asks for her son's life to be spared – foreshadows the cannibalism which ends the play. Lucius drives this image home with his confirmation of the deed: "Alarbus' limbs are lopped / And entrails feed the sacrificing fire" (1.1.143-44). The emphasis of these passages on limbs "clean consumed" and entrails which "feed" the fire evokes a sense of a cannibalistic roasting of Alarbus by Titus's sons. At the end of Act 1, Alarbus represents the consumed and the Andronicus family the consumers. The cycle of revenge that dominates the plot begins here.

The tables turn shortly thereafter, though, and remain that way through most of the play. Demetrius, when planning his rape of Lavinia, compares her body to a loaf of bread: "easy it is / Of a cut loaf to steal a shive" (2.1.86-87). Because she is married and presumably no longer a virgin, Demetrius characterizes Lavinia as a loaf of bread that has been sliced, or shived.¹⁵ Because of this, he expects stealing a slice – raping her – will be easier than if he had to slice the loaf himself. Later he compares Lavinia to game for which he and his brother are hunting: "Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound, / But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground" (2.2.25-26). Tamora also associates Lavinia with food when she warns Chiron to kill her soon after the rape: "But when ye have the honey ye desire / Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting" (2.3.131-32).¹⁶ Finally, Chiron refers to "[t]hat nice-preserved honesty of yours" when speaking to Lavinia, likening her chastity to a carefully preserved perishable food item like fruit or meat preserves (2.3.135).¹⁷ In this scene, Chiron, Demetrius, and Tamora symbolically begin to consume the Andronicus family by characterizing Lavinia in terms of food and proceeding to rape and maim her body. This act marks the beginning of Tamora's vengeance.

As Tamora joins with Saturninus, the Emperor of Rome, the play's very setting seems hungry for the flesh of the Andronicus clan. Martius compares Lavinia's husband Bassianus to

“a slaughtered lamb” in a “detested, dark, blood-drinking pit” (2.3.223-24). Later, Saturninus reads of “the mouth of that same pit” in a letter about Bassianus’s death (2.3.273). Titus asks, “Let my tears stanch the earth’s dry appetite; / My sons’ sweet blood will make it shame and blush” (3.1.14-15). He also asks the earth to “refuse to drink my dear sons’ blood” (3.1.22). Titus expresses a belief that Rome wishes to devour the Andronicus family:

Rome is but a wilderness of tigers ...

Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey

But me and mine. How happy art thou then

From these devourers to be banished! (3.1.53-56)

He characterizes Lucius as better-off because of his banishment away from the “devourers.” And when Titus mourns the death of his sons, he imagines that they have been swallowed by the ocean.¹⁸ The play’s language and imagery characterize the play’s setting as hungry for Titus and his progeny. The ground seems ready to swallow up Titus and his family.

In the meantime, the cycle of cruelty between Titus and Tamora continues. With the encouragement of Aaron, Tamora’s lover, Titus sacrifices his own flesh, trading his hand for the promise of the lives of his two captured sons (3.1.190). But Aaron’s ransom offer turns out to be a trick, and Titus receives his severed hand along with the heads of his sons a few lines later (233). Saturninus and Tamora have rejected Titus’s sacrifice of flesh and killed his sons, sending the material evidence of to him via messenger. In addition to the hostile environment, the play’s food and drink are characterized as unwholesome, unedible, or unuseful to the Andronicus family. Of his grief at Lavinia’s rape, Titus vows: “And in the fountain shall we gaze so long / Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness, / And made a brine pit with our bitter tears” (3.1.128-29). They will saturate their own freshwater fountain with the salt of their tears,

rendering its water as undrinkable as brine, a salt-saturated water sometimes used for preservation.¹⁹ As they sit down to their meal, the newly handless Titus instructs Marcus, the ravaged and voiceless Lavinia, and young Lucius: “eat no more / Than will preserve just so much strength in us / As will revenge these bitter woes of ours” (3.2.1-3). All ceremony and pleasure is dispensed; they are merely fueling their bodies to finish their revenge. But Lavinia refuses to partake of the meal or even to drink water, as Titus interprets:

Come, let's fall to; and, gentle girl, eat this.

Here is no drink! Hark, Marcus, what she says

I can interpret all her martyred signs.

She says she drinks no other drink but tears,

Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks. (3.2.34-38)

Lavinia rejects even the necessity and comfort of water, wishing not to prolong her life by any means and drinking her own tears instead. Lavinia's refusal of water is analogous to self-starvation; she refuses wholesome and necessary sustenance and instead re-assimilates the tears that fall from her eyes and roll down her cheeks. As Titus begins to plot the form of his revenge, Lavinia's self-consumption weighs heavily upon his mind.

In contrast, Aaron suffers no such nutritional inhospitality in Rome, benefiting from his lover's alliance with the emperor. He exclaims: “O, how this villainy / Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!” (3.1.201-202), suggesting that he derives nutritive value from the play's events. And Aaron suggests a kind of familial cannibalism when he introduces his child to Chiron and Demetrius: “He is your brother, lords, sensibly fed / Of that self blood that first gave life to you” (4.2.121-22). Rather than simply being children of Tamora, the three are linked through the consumption of Tamora's blood.²⁰ To his child, Aaron promises:

I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,
 And fat on curds and whey, and suck the goat,
 And cabin in a cave, and bring you up
 To be a warrior and command a camp. (4.2.176-79)

As he kills the nurse he fears will share the secret of his child's origins, Aaron cruelly taunts her, comparing her to an animal being prepared for cooking: "'Wheak, wheak' – so cries a pig prepared to the spit" (4.2.145). Aaron sees the woman as not only disposable, but as consumable, like a roasted pig. He delights in his place near the top of the play's "food chain."

Tamora seeks to continue occupying the top of the play's food chain, but as the power of the play begins to shift back to Titus, her words fail to maintain the imagery of consuming the Andronicus family. She still carries the burden of revenge for Alarbus's death, but her passion has begun to wane. Instead of pursuing Titus's flesh with the intense cruelty shown earlier, she speaks in terms of feeding him poisoned words:

I will enchant the old Andronicus
 With words more sweet and yet more dangerous
 Than baits to fish or honey-stalks to sheep
 Whenas the one is wounded with the bait,
 The other rotted with delicious feed. (4.4.88-92).

Honey-stalks are the stalks or flowers of clover.²¹ According to the University of Illinois Veterinary Medicine Library, certain species of clover are particularly insidious to sheep because of their isoflavone estrogen activity.²² Tamora intends to ensnare Titus with deceptively "sweet" but "dangerous" words that she hopes will lure him like a fish into a hook or net and then wound and rot his body. Still, these words begin to mark a turning point in the symbolism of the play;

though still *pursued* by Tamora and subject to her trap, Titus and his family stop being the *consumed*.

As he carries out his plan for revenge, Titus approaches the captured Chiron and Demetrius and reveals to them his intent:

You know your mother means to feast with me,
 And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad.
 Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust,
 And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,
 And of the paste a coffin I will rear,
 And make two pasties of your shameful heads,
 And bid that strumpet, your unhallowed dam,
 Like to the earth swallow her own increase.

This is the feast that I have bid her to.

And this the banquet she shall surfeit on[.] (5.2.183-92)

Titus will powder their bones, mix the powder with blood to form a dough, and fashion a “coffin” from that dough, making “two pasties,” or pies, from their heads. Tamora’s unwitting cannibalism is thus stylized as a kind of burial of the sons’ deviant bodies within Tamora’s deviant body – a material “unbirthing” of Chiron and Demetrius, or an attempt to undo their existence by feeding them back into the body from whence they were born. Titus repeats his plan to Lavinia as he carries it out, expressing his intent to “play the cook” (5.2.202).

Catherine Armstrong reports that before 1609-1610, “the cannibal” in literature and travel narratives “immediately became ‘the other’ and over time ‘the other’ (i.e., anyone not white, not European) became ‘the cannibal.’”²³ In short, the political value of the concept of cannibalism

was its use as a powerful “othering” tool – the belief that non-Europeans were uncivilized and even evil.²⁴ Of course, this concept was later threatened by accounts of English colonists engaging in cannibalism. Fitzpatrick compares the Goths in *Titus Andronicus* with early modern English images of the Irish: “England’s colonial expansion into Ireland provoked anxieties about hybridity and the fluidity of cultural boundaries ... Absorption of strange foodstuffs would, it was thought, make strange the English body and initiate a wider social corruption which will inevitably undermine English cultural superiority.”²⁵ She points out that

[i]n his depiction of Aaron and Tamora, Shakespeare elides simplistic notions of what characterizes alterity. Although Tamora indulges in the barbaric act of cannibalism she eats with ignorant innocence while Titus’s monstrosity is shown in the act of making the pie. ... Titus brings Roman civility itself into question and any sense of innate Roman moral superiority is undermined by his involvement in an act that characterizes barbarity.²⁶

His slaughter and preparation of Chiron and Demetrius into food, then, suggest that Titus has been corrupted by his dealings with Tamora.

Upon serving the food, Titus apologizes for the dish’s humbleness: “Although the cheer be poor, / ’Twill fill your stomachs. Please you, eat of it” (5.3.28-29). He adds, eagerly, “Will’t please you eat? Will’t please your highness feed?” (5.3.53). Tamora eats as Saturninus requests that Titus call for Chiron and Demetrius. Titus answers, “Why, there they are, both baked in this pie, / Whereof their mother daintily hath fed, / Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.” (5.3.59-61). Fitzpatrick speculates that “we might wonder whether Shakespeare was suggesting that by consuming her monstrous sons Tamora would reabsorb the barbarity she herself encouraged.”²⁷ While I agree that this symbolic intention of reabsorbed barbarity is present, I

argue further that Titus more importantly intends Tamora's literal and material reabsorption and reassimilation of the bodies she created and bore into the world. He seeks to reverse the birth and denounce the very existence of Chiron and Demetrius. Titus's attempt at justice does evince a kind of perverse logic: as his daughter is slowly dehydrates by consuming only the issue of her eyes, he feeds Tamora the issue of her womb, the men who engendered his daughter's cycle of self-destructive consumption.

The play's *dénouement* involves consumption of several types. Marcus addresses the Roman people, likening them first to grain and then to a dismembered body: "O, let me teach you how to knit again / This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf, / These broken limbs again into one body" (5.3.69-71). Lucius refers to Aaron as "this ravenous tiger" (5.3.5) and Tamora as "that ravenous tiger" (5.3.194), commanding that Aaron "receive no sust'nance" (5.3.6) and ultimately set "breast-deep in earth" as starved as he is forced to "stand, and rave, and cry for food" (5.3.178-79). He forbids funeral rites for Tamora and commands instead, with the play's closing lines:

But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,
And being dead, let birds on her take pity. (5.3.194-99)

This time, Tamora and her clan are the ones consumed by Rome.

Titus's revenge successfully restores his family to the top of the play's "food chain," but it also shifts the audience's sympathies to Tamora as her consumption of her son's flesh dawns on her at the table. The physical reality in the play's final scene is messy and unsatisfying. The audience member who feels sympathy upon Titus's receipt of his hand with the head of his sons

feels disgusted at his retaliation. Titus and Tamora have both exacted revenge through human flesh; both parties have lost. Vengeance is physically complete, but still empty.

Feast, Fast, and Penitence: *Timon of Athens*

The action of Shakespeare's *The Life of Timon of Athens* (likely written circa 1607) revolves closely around food. Its literal and metaphorical significance permeates Timon's creation and redefinition of his relationship to the play's other characters. The representations of meat and wine in the play emphasize the destructive cycle of ingratitude and insatiability perpetuated by extravagant consumption, while the corresponding images of roots and water suggest purification and redemption. Through its treatment of nutritional excess and austerity, this play offers a recipe for expiation and a perspective on the differences between virtuous and sinful foods. Timon's actions, then, represent a material, corporeal rejection of the culture of feasting, consumption, debt, and social nicety to which he had so thoroughly ascribed. Timon fasts on roots and water in part as an expression of penitence and in part to preserve his cannibalized identity from further consumption by the citizens of Athens.

Citizens of seventeenth-century London would have been hyper-aware of issues of food and extravagant consumption. Julia Briggs details how the paradigm shift from traditional feudalism to agrarian capitalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries created a new world of instability for the lower classes. Many flocked to the towns, which were developing around trade and "the provision of services required by those with money."²⁸ She refers to the popular perception of the "greed and rapacity of citizens who flourished at the expense of the countryside."²⁹ The crisis brought on by the fourfold population growth London experienced between the beginning and the end of the sixteenth century combined with these perceptions to

create class tensions at the beginning of the seventeenth century:

[t]he more successful embarked on spending sprees, lavishing money on houses, clothes, furniture, and, less visibly, dowries and education. [...] Even the careful found it necessary to borrow at times, while extravagant gallants and young men-about-town could fall hopelessly into debt, being forced to mortgage their land until the money-lenders finally foreclosed on their forfeited property. Reckless prodigals and grasping usurers were favourite targets of Jacobean comedy.³⁰

In short, as the lines between classes blurred and downward social mobility became more common, theatergoers would have been familiar with these controversies and the fear that the increased population would exhaust the available food supply.³¹

By Act 3, Timon closely resembles Briggs's description of men having fallen "hopelessly into debt." The most pervasive food references in *Timon of Athens* are to the meat and wine provided by the extravagant Timon. The provisions of Timon's table consistently evoke images of human flesh and blood. Acts 1 and 2 are characterized by the symbolic cannibalization of Timon by the men he calls friends.³² Apemantus, the churlish philosopher, spends a great deal of Act 1, Scene 1 pontificating about consumption in the play. He refuses to participate in the polite exchanges and meals to which Timon invites him:

TIMON. Wilt dine with me, Apemantus?

APEMANTUS. No, I eat not lords.

TIMON. An thou shouldst, thou'dst anger ladies.

APEMANTUS. O, they eat lords. So they come by great bellies. (1.1.205-208)

Apemantus's refusal is also an indictment of those who have accepted Timon's invitation or shown up of their own accord. Apemantus goes on to argue that ladies feed upon their lords,

evoking both cannibalistic and sexual suggestions: “great bellies” imply both fullness and pregnancy. He denounces the coming activities while expressing his intent to watch the feast: “Ay, to see meat fill knaves and wine heat fools” (261). By introducing the consumers of meat and wine as “knaves” and “fools,” Shakespeare indicates a tone toward Timon’s flatterers that he develops throughout the play. Even Timon’s flatterers use cannibalistic language. Alcibiades says to Timon: “Sir, you have saved my longing, and I feed / Most hungrily on your sight” (1.1.253-54). The First Lord asks the Second, “Come, shall we in, / And taste Lord Timon’s bounty?” (1.1.272-73).

Apemantus continues his tirade against cannibalism at Timon’s first banquet. By refusing to partake of the extravagant food, he distinguishes himself from Timon’s flatterers: “I scorn thy meat. ‘Twould choke me, for I should ne’er flatter thee. O you gods, what a number of men eats Timon, and he sees ’em not! It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man’s blood; and all the madness is, he cheers them up, too” (1.2.37-41). His use of “choke” even rejects the food as a viable nutritional source. Apemantus, unlike most of the other characters (excepting Flavius), perceives that the flatterers are doing damage to Timon and his household. The imagery of men dipping meat in Timon’s blood casts the previously festive situation in a strikingly sinister light. The men are devouring his estate and depleting his future, metaphorically cannibalizing Timon.

Apemantus offers an alternative to the rich meats and wine that Timon enjoys with his guests:

Here’s that which is too weak to be a sinner:

Honest water, which ne’er left man I’th’ mire.

This and my food are equals; there’s no odds.

Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods. (1.2.57-60)

Apemantus ends his grace in Act 1, Scene 2 with the proclamation “Rich men sin, and I eat root” (1.2.70). Flavius expresses a more tempered, but similarly anti-excess view: “Happier is he that has no friend to feed / Than such that do e’en enemies exceed” (1.2.197-98). He voices his concern about “riotous feeders” (2.2.154) and “slaves and peasants ... englutted” (2.2.161) to Timon, wisely warning his master that such friends are “[f]east won, fast lost” (2.2.166). Flavius’s clever wordplay suggests that friends who are won by food and gifts are “fast lost” – both “fast” to turn away and likely to turn away during times of scarcity and “fast.” Timon, however, refuses to listen.

Upon Flaminus’ arrival to request a loan on behalf of Timon in Act 3, Scene 1, Lucullus represents a prototypical flatterer who proves Flavius correct. Lucullus asks for and receives wine immediately before he refuses Timon’s request for money (3.1.8, 37-38). Shakespeare invites the audience to condemn Lucullus’ greedy wine consumption as he exposes himself as a false friend to Timon. Flaminus’ curse of Lucullus, then, appropriately focuses on the earlier banquet:

This slave

Unto this hour has my lord’s meat in him.

Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment,

When he is turned to poison?

O, may diseases only work upon’t;

And when he’s sick to death, let not that part of nature

Which my lord paid for be of any power

To expel sickness, but prolong his hour! (3.1.50-57)

Here, Flaminus laments the continued material benefit of nourishment that Lucullus derives from the meat served at Timon's table. His statement that Lucullus has turned to poison, especially when read against Apemantus' refusal to recognize the meat as an acceptable source of nutrition, suggests that the feasting has tainted or corrupted Lucullus and that this man who is glad to consume Timon is unwilling to be consumed. Flaminus' curse focuses on a bodily sickness to accompany the "poison" that Lucullus has already derived from the meat.³³ This close attention to Lucullus's digestion draws attention to the effects of the immoderate banqueting and brings the symbolic references to cannibalism squarely into the realm of material imagery. The "meat" which Lucullus digests here is clearly not lamb or beef; Lucullus assimilates human flesh.

The damage caused by the feasting seems to extend throughout Timon's household to the very walls of his home: "The place which I have feasted, does it now, / Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?" (3.4.82-3). As a respected member of the household, Flavius necessarily takes Timon's plight personally: the flatterers are consuming Flavius' social position and livelihood along with Timon's fortune. When Lucius' servants accost Flavius for money, he responds quietly and bitterly:

Why then preferred you not your sums and bills
 When your false masters ate of my lord's meat?
 Then they could smile, and fawn upon his debts,
 And take down th' int'rest into their glutt'nous maws. (3.4.50-53)

His use of "false" emphasizes the dishonesty of the "glutt'nous" flatterers; they accepted and ate of Timon's meat upon a pretense of friendship. In other words, they never intended their relationship with Timon to produce anything but one-sided generosity. The image of them smiling and fawning upon Timon's debts further defames the flatterers.

The image defames Timon as well. Miola addresses the implications of food in this play, arguing that Shakespeare portrays excess as a judgment on the indiscriminate and unruly nature of Athenian democracy and its moral decadence.³⁴ Miola describes his interpretation of the play's excess vividly: "lavish fare, sumptuous display, and excessive appetite"³⁵; "gluttony, prostitution, and disease"³⁶; and finally "vices of envy and ingratitude."³⁷ According to Miola, Shakespeare makes a blatant distinction between Timon and the well-known Cimon of Athens on the basis of this very question of lifestyle: "Cimon lived like a Spartan, austere and modestly, and stocked his table only with necessities. He restricted his guests to the poor and needy and conducted his affairs without ostentation and display. He bore his betrayal with patience and equanimity and gladly returned to assist his beleaguered city."³⁸

Cimon represents a personality whom Shakespeare's audience could admire, in contrast to Timon, whose "undiscriminating liberality was not likely to be construed in Shakespeare's time as generosity."³⁹ So Shakespeare perhaps intends for his audience to disapprove of Timon's "liberality" from the beginning. Briggs argues that whereas "true generosity" rose from "a haughty disdain for material wealth [...] marked by temperance and modesty," behavior like Timon's "was marked by extravagance and egotism."⁴⁰ Thong concurs that in the banquet course, as in other matters, "Timon is over-liberal with his hospitality."⁴¹ Finally, Miola points out that Shakespeare carefully condemns the feasting throughout this play "as grossly sensual excess."⁴² These critics agree that early modern society valued moderation over showy excess and that Timon was an archetype of an foolish and undesirable personality. Thus when Timon leaves his estate and abjures the society of men, he does so not simply as a victim, but as an unwise man whose immoderation has led to his circumstances. As Timon's fortune and estate disintegrate, he has need to repent and is forced to recognize and bear the burden for his choices.

In Apemantus's Act 1, Scene 2 pre-meal grace – “Rich men sin, and I eat root” (1.2.70) – to “eat root” opposes sin and consumption. After leaving Athens, Timon becomes unusually focused in his mission to discover roots to eat. Angry at a society that has used him up and then failed him, but also recognizing and repenting his own folly, Timon clings to the wisdom espoused by the churlish Apemantus all along and seeks to alleviate his pain and fault with angry words and an austere diet. While cursing the events that produced his situation, he desperately digs and speaks to the earth: “[d]estruction fang mankind. Earth, yield me roots. / Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate / With thy most operant poison” (4.3.23-25). Exceedingly frustrated by the gold he finds instead, Timon demands “roots, you clear heavens” (4.3.28). Desperate, still digging, he prays to the earth to alleviate his hunger:

Common mother – thou
 Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast
 Teems and feeds all ...
 Yield him who all the human sons do hate,
 From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root! (4.3.177-86)

Timon is experiencing pangs of hunger, but when he finally uncovers a root, he is, for the moment, neither pompous nor bitter: “O, a root! Dear thanks” (4.3.192). Timon's rejection of his former life of feasting, consumption, and friendship depends upon his ability to fast on the materials he is able to obtain through self reliance. His fortune has run out, his friends have failed him, and he is left only with his metaphorically cannibalized body, his penitence, and the provisions of the earth: roots and water.

Marjorie Garber notes that “[t]he word ‘root’ is surprisingly omnipresent in this play” and that “‘root’ appears more times in *Timon* than any other play.”⁴³ John M. Wallace also

explores the meaning of roots in “‘Timon of Athens’ and the Three Graces: Shakespeare’s Senecan Study.” He argues that Shakespeare has disguised Seneca’s Three Graces of reciprocity within the play’s three “graces,” the prayers spoken by Apemantus and Timon before meals. He points out that two of these graces are spoken over roots—Act 1, Scene 2, when Apemantus denounces the meat and wine in favor of a root, and Act 4, Scene 3, in which Timon gives thanks immediately after unearthing a root. Wallace claims that “[t]his third grace, a brief interjection of gratitude into an angry tirade, may be one of the shortest graces on record, but it is also the only genuine grace in the play.”⁴⁴ He furthermore points out that “Apemantus’ grace and Timon’s last grace are both said over a root, *which is the basic particle of sustenance in this play*, the quark of the benefit system upon which Timon’s early luxury rises like a monstrous excrescence.”⁴⁵ This again advocates repentance and austerity as a preferable route to the destructive cannibalism of the first two acts.

The play associates water with roots in the same way that it pairs wine with meat. In his grace, Apemantus praises the virtues of water: “[h]onest water, which ne’er left man i’ th’ mire” (1.2.58). Then, after the flatterers discover that second banquet consists of warm water and stones, Timon begins his furious speech to them:

May you a better feast never behold,
 You knot of mouth-friends. Smoke and lukewarm water
 Is your perfection. This is Timon’s last;
 Who, stuck and spangled with your flatteries,
 Washes it off and sprinkles in your faces
 Your reeking villainy. (3.7.80-85).

Timon uses the water symbolically to cleanse and counteract the damage done by the feasting.

He washes off the flatteries “stuck and spangled” to him. He then throws the remaining water in his guests’ faces in what might be construed as an attempt to cleanse them.⁴⁶

When Apemantus visits Timon and asks about his provisions – “Will the cold brook, / Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste / To cure thy o’ernight’s surfeit?” (4.3.225-27) – Timon suggests that, before his fall, he had the world as his “confectionary” (4.3.260). He says of an unearthed root, “That the whole life of Athens were in this! / Thus I would eat it” before biting it (4.3.283-84). I have examined Apemantus’s refusal of the food Timon offered in Act 1, Scene 1 (205); when Apemantus offers Timon food in Act 4, Scene 3, Timon returns Apemantus’s earlier refusal and proceeds to harass the churl:

APEMANTUS. There’s a medlar for thee; eat it.

TIMON. On what I hate I feed not.

APEMANTUS. Dost hate a medlar?

TIMON. Ay, though it look like thee.

APEMANTUS. An thou’dst hated meddlers sooner, thou shouldst have loved thyself better now. (4.3.294-309)

A medlar is a small fruit that is a cousin of the apple. It was valued as a late-ripening fruit, picked in autumn but remaining too hard to consume until winter, when it would begin to decompose.⁴⁷ Timon rejects the offer, expressing hatred for the fruit and suggesting that it resembles Apemantus. This rejection of any food from Apemantus is absolutely essential to his bodily repentance and shift away from the life of feasting, consumption, excess, and society, however. Apemantus is Timon’s chosen example of a lifestyle other than the one he was living, so he must adhere to the rules taught by Apemantus. So Timon continues to harass Apemantus, imagining a fox eats him, and then imagining that he becomes “breakfast to the wolf,”

suggesting that he “shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner” (4.3.326-331). Fitzpatrick argues that “Timon is in effect himself eaten up with misanthropy. Regret, hunger for revenge, and diseases which ravage the body preoccupy Timon’s ascetic (and hence, by early modern standards, exotic) existence, his previous magnanimity and desire to feed replaced by the desire to poison others.”⁴⁸ I argue instead that Timon’s adoption of Apemantus’s philosophy and behavior is a means of repentance, self-cleansing, and self-preservation. He has abjured the unwholesome meat and wine of his former table and seeks to remake his body out of the simplest, most humble nutritional building blocks.

Timon’s actions represent a corporeal rejection of the culture of feasting, consumption, debt, and social nicety to which he had so thoroughly ascribed. Timon fasts on roots and water in part as an expression of penitence and in part to preserve his cannibalized identity from further consumption. The representations of meat and wine in this play emphasize the destructiveness of Timon’s prior overconsumption; the portrayal of roots and water depict his reconstitution of his body. He is not intentionally starving himself (it is not clear whether his death at the end of the play is due to malnutrition or other causes), but should his body become a leaner, slighter version of its former self as a result of his limited fasting, then the cannibals who continue to pursue Timon will find less to consume.

Starvation and Absolution: *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

We now shift genre from political tragedy to domestic tragedy and move back in time four years to discuss Thomas Heywood’s *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (1603), a play that is rife with consumption, both real and symbolic.⁴⁹ Mistress Anne repents for her adultery by refusing food and drink until she dies. As she wastes away, banished from her husband’s house,

her community and family slowly gather around her, until her husband forgives her as she takes her last breath. Several of the most important scenes take place around the dinner table, and many of the characters imagine consuming themselves or others. Wendy Wall argues that “[t]he play’s emphasis on separable and cannibalized body parts – brain, eyeball, heart, belly – raises the specter of household relations as an ever-shifting set of dissected corporeal exchanges.”⁵⁰ Mistress Anne ultimately dies of starvation, but she is no longer in exile. Her performance of starvation should be read as an act of self-consumption in which she depletes the flesh that has propagated her sin.

Sir Francis first foreshadows the marital problems of Frankford and his sister Anne when he observes not her consumption but her speech: “How strangely the word ‘husband’ fits your mouth, / not married three hours since, sister” (1.38-39). Green explores the connection between the female appetite for speech (“greedy ear”) and for food. She suggests that “[t]he fear of excessive consumption by women also prompted conduct book writers to advocate restraining the female appetite for food”⁵¹ and argues that Anne’s adultery is caused by her aural openness.⁵² Frankford, however, seems almost naïve to the possibilities of marital infidelity; his generosity to Nick extends ambiguously from his table to the other areas of his life: “Please you to use my table and my purse / They are yours” (4.65-66).⁵³ One’s table referred not only to the piece of furniture upon which meals were eaten and games were played, but also to “[f]ood and drink provided for a meal” and “the supply of food in a household, especially as hospitality for a guest.”⁵⁴ So Frankford offers Wendoll a servant, transportation, and a place at their meals as well as access to the household pantry in exchange for companionship (4.70-72). His actions (similar to those of Timon) were extravagant and overeager rather than wise and generous. Frankford then requests, “Prithee Nan, / Use him with all thy lovingest courtesy” (4.79-80). Anne humbly

responds to his request: “As far as modesty may well extend, / It is my duty to receive your friend” (81-82). Bryan argues that food is symbolically linked with erotic love and lust in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, pointing out that “Heywood consistently uses eating to represent erotic love or lust, specifically that of Wendoll for Anne.”⁵⁵ Frey and Lieblein observe this connection as well: “In seducing Anne he consumes Frankford’s hospitality not only by eating at his table but also by metaphorically devouring his wife.”⁵⁶ Bryan characterizes these scenes as Frankford’s “unconscious offering of his wife to his friend.”⁵⁷ The lines between table and bed begin to obscure.

As Wendoll’s presence in the household becomes more routine, he begins to observe that Frankford’s affection for him resembles physical dependence:

He cannot eat without me,
Nor laugh without me; I am to his body
As necessary as his digestion,
And equally do make him whole or sick. (6.40-43)

Frankford’s corporeal attachment to his friend Wendoll is such that Wendoll is as necessary “to his body” as digestion – the means by which food provides nourishment. Wendoll’s presence or absence makes Frankford “whole or sick.” Frankford seems to have even more of a physical attachment to his friend than he is expected to have with his wife. Green suggests that “Frankford fails to consider how his own openness to, and desire for, his friend may have led to the destruction of his marriage.”⁵⁸ Wall’s analysis takes this observation a step further: “Unified thus into the husbandly body, the gentleman servant profits by seemingly losing his self-identity, but this subsumption erodes the mark of his subordination in the domestic hierarchy.”⁵⁹ Wendoll casts himself as a bodily function of Frankford – a bodily function *like* digestion. With the

linkage of food consumption and sexuality already seen in the play, Wendoll imagines that sharing sex with Anne is just a facet of the companionship he shares with Frankford.

When Anne relays Frankford's message to Wendoll, the ensuing conversation plays with these possibilities:

he wills you as you prize his love ...

To make bold in his absence and command

Even as himself were present in the house,

For you must keep his table, use his servants,

And be a present Frankford in his absence. (6.73-78)

Of course, her final statement can be read as Frankford's implicit permission to have sex with Anne. Again Anne is associated with Frankford's table as she reminds Wendoll of his freedom to "keep his table, use his servants" and otherwise act as Frankford when Frankford is away. Anne's arguments to Wendoll that "his table / Doth freely serve you" (6.116-17) read both as statements of protest and as attempts to convince herself that her "lovingest courtesy" might involve sex with Wendoll. Green observes that this statement echoes the "link between sexual and oral appetite" within the play.⁶⁰

The struggles of Nick, Frankford's loyal servant, provide a fascinating map through the rising action of the play. Ever loyal to Frankford, Nick begins using colorful consumption imagery to express his disdain for Wendoll: "If I pluck off his boots, I'll eat the spurs, / And they shall stick fast in my throat like burs" (4.97-98). Nick vows to swallow and choke on the boot spurs of Wendoll if he serves the man at all.⁶¹ As Wendoll and Anne begin their affair, Nick again expresses his outrage with their behavior by referencing his desire to consume his own hand, an impulse of both cannibalism and self-consumption:

My master shall not pocket up this wrong;
 I'll eat my fingers first. What sayst thou metal?
 Does not the rascal Wendoll go on legs
 That thou must cut off? Hath he not hamstrings
 That thou must hough? (6.169-73)

Nick expresses his distress at the situation with a vow to engage in self-consumption – to eat his own hand – if it is allowed to continue. Then he graphically imagines cutting off Wendoll's legs and rending his hamstrings. This rhetorical flight indicates Nick's fantasy of butchering Wendoll and immediately precedes Nick's decision to hazard his own safety and tell Frankford what he knows.

The stage direction that begins Scene 8 indicates that servingmen enter with "salt and bread," a first course to the meal. The next stage direction instructs Frankford to enter while "brushing the crumbs from his clothes with a napkin, and newly risen from supper." As he approaches his master and his anxiety increases, Nick's musings become unmistakably cannibalistic: "I cannot eat, but had I Wendoll's heart / I would eat that" (8.17-18).⁶² Nick suffers a beating for his honesty, but he heads to dinner with a light heart and a renewed appetite: "And now that I have eased my stomach, / I will go fill my stomach" (8.96-97). Wall perceptively argues that Nick's impulse in these scenes represents his attempt to "replace Frankford's voluntary incorporation of Wendoll with Nick's forced penetration into Frankford's heart."⁶³ But Nick's struggle to bear the burden of the adulterous knowledge follows a mounting narrative, beginning with impulses of self-mutilation upon meeting Wendoll (eating his spurs), transforming to ideations of self-consumption and a fantasy of butchering (eating his own hand and cutting off Wendoll's legs and houghing hamstrings), and then becoming outright

cannibalistic musing (eating Wendoll's heart). He transfers this burden to Frankford and returns easily to a normal state of consumption, eagerly hurrying off to fill his stomach at the end of the scene. The household's sexual entanglement has burdened Nick's appetite first.

When Frankford assumes the knowledge from Nick, he also inherits the disordered appetite Nick had exhibited. He busies himself with a plan to discover the lovers in the act. One evening at dinnertime, but before he has eaten any food, Frankford tells Anne, Wendoll, and the rest of the household that he must suddenly leave town on business. His household protests, encouraging him to stay to the meal and put off the business, but he is unwavering. Frankford pointedly makes a request of his companion: "Master Wendoll, in my absence use / The very ripest pleasure of my house" (11.63-64). Again, Frankford's remark figuratively designates Anne as food (in this case, ripe produce). When Frankford has departed, Wendoll addresses Anne: "My *pleasure* is / We will not sup abroad so publicly, / But in your private chamber, Mistress Frankford." (11.90-92, emphasis added). Jenkin, presumably worried about the stability of the household in which he works, expresses his concern to another servant: "if they do sup together, pray god they do not lie together" (12.12-13).

As he approaches his "polluted bed-chamber," Frankford again uses imagery of ripe produce, characterizing the room as "[t]he place where sins in all their ripeness dwell" (13.14-16). In response to Frankford's command to tread softly, Nick again refers to food: "I will walk on eggs this pace" (21). Bryan points out that this food reference lends irony to the scene "since eggs were commonly believed to be an aphrodisiac."⁶⁴ Frankford prays, upon entering the bedchamber, "Lend me such patience to *digest* my grief / That I may keep this white and virgin hand / From any violent outrage or red murder" (13.31-33, emphasis added). Frankford approaches the lovers as though consuming the situation, wishing that he might effectively digest

and assimilate his feelings. After discovering the lovers and gaining his temper, Frankford orders that his and Anne's children be brought to shame Anne and then immediately taken away, "lest as her spotted body / Hath stained their names with stripe of bastardy, / So her adulterous breath may blast their spirits / With her infectious thoughts" (13.125-128). Here again, illicit sex is compared to food; in this case, juicy, fragrant food upon the mouth of Anne which causes her to stain her children and threaten them with "adulterous breath." When Frankford discovers Anne, he seemingly also bequeaths to her the burden he inherited from Nick. As she processes her sin and guilt, Anne first imagines having her body rended: "O to redeem my honor / I would have this hand cut off, these my breasts seared" (13.135-36). Frankford then express his intent to kill Anne "even with kindness" (13.157) and banishes her to his country manor.

As she is traveling to the country manor, she requests to send a message to her estranged husband through Nick:

If you return unto your master say –
 ...That you have seen me weep, wish myself dead –
 Last night you saw me eat and drink my last.
 This to your master you may say and swear,
 For it is writ in heaven and decreed here. (16.59-66)

Anne announces that she will starve herself by ingesting neither food nor drink as a sort of penance for her sins. She later reiterates her intention and clarifies her plan to die of starvation: "I never will nor eat, nor drink, nor taste / Of any cates that may preserve my life." (16.103-104). Anne has turned her guilt inward. Instead of her arm or breasts being cut from her body, she has decided to engage in self-consumption, depleting the "polluted" body that has propagated her sin.

As news of Anne's proclamations and actions spread, public opinion begins to restyle her from disgraced wife to martyr.

SIR FRANCIS. Is she so weak in body?

JENKINS. O sir, I can assure you there's no help of life in her, for she will take no sustenance. She hath plainly starved herself, and now she is as lean as a lath. She ever looks for the good hour. Many gentlemen and gentlewomen of the country are come to comfort her. (17.33-38)

If, as Green argues, Anne's adultery is caused by her aural openness, it is ultimately reformed by her oral closure.⁶⁵ As she weakens, the members of her community flock to her bedside to comfort her:

ANNE. Blush I not, Sir Charles?

Can you not read my fault in my cheek?

Is not my crime there? Tell me, gentlemen.

SIR CHARLES. Alas, good mistress, sickness hath not left you

Blood in your face enough to make you blush. (17.55-59)

Frey and Lieblen acknowledge that "the language of the scene insists upon the physical consequences of Anne Frankford's decision to starve herself ... [i]t emphasizes her thinness, her weakness, her faintness, and her paleness. She asks for some air, needs assistance to be raised a little higher in bed, and is, in the words of the servant Jenkin, 'as lean as a lath.'⁶⁶ But they go on to argue, rather problematically, that Anne's choice to starve herself is a powerful act of resistance against a patriarchal society that uses food and eating as forms of control.⁶⁷ It is, however, difficult to accept that a woman starving her body to weakness and death – even if it results in forgiveness and a return to grace – yields any real or valuable power for her if the very

act that seals that power is the one that removes her from existence. Frey and Lieblein argue that Heywood's other writings reveal his fascination with women such as Amazons "who reject conventional feminine roles by choosing alarming self-disfigurement"⁶⁸ and that the breast-removal typical of Amazon women and Anne's self-starvation are each "unique expressions of female power to not-nourish."⁶⁹ It seems unclear how this "power to not-nourish" is uniquely female in this context, though; could not men choose to harness the same power and starve themselves as well? They suggest that Anne's

self-mutilation in the form of self starvation shares with the Amazons' acts of male infanticide and breast removal a direct attack on patriarchal authority. If eating in Frankford's works is an instrument of patriarchy that masks the culture's distrust of the passionate body, Anne's self-starvation is a refusal to ingest the food that has been an instrument of social control.⁷⁰

Carolyn Walker Bynum argues convincingly that religious fasting yielded medieval women a significant measure of power; however, Anne's fasting is not religious and Bynum does not include death by starvation in her definition of empowering bodily control.⁷¹ Taken generally, Frey and Lieblein's argument suggests that if oppressors appropriate that which is necessary to live (air, shelter, sustenance), then an effective protest of such an appropriation is to forego the necessity and suffocate, freeze, or starve. The comparison of the thin, trembling body in Anne's bed with that of the well-muscled body of an Amazon warrior disappoints materially at least as much as it fails ideologically.

When Frankford visits her, she asks for his forgiveness, first with hesitancy, and then with more confidence:

Faintness hath so usurped upon my knees

That kneel I cannot; but on my heart's knees

My prostrate soul lies thrown down at your feet

To beg your gracious pardon. Pardon, O pardon me! (89-92)

Green argues that Anne's starvation cannot be characterized as penance: "First, in terms of Protestant theology, penance through 'works' is unconscionable. Second, Anne's self-imposed starvation results in her suicide and that, according to Christian theology, would lead to her eternal damnation."⁷² I argue that if Anne is seeking social redemption rather than religious salvation, though, these distinctions are considerably less important. And though Anne's fasting could be associated with a long history of religious visionary fasting, Green accepts that the circumstances which prompt it, combined with Anne's intentions, diminish this possibility.⁷³ Green asserts a sense of power to Anne's decision somewhat more convincingly than Frey and Lieblein, however:

Anne's starvation is not simply a penitential reaction to Frankford's sentence but a rebellion against it, one that is asserted with the same divine authority he has claimed. He may banish her to a manor 'seven mile off.' But she can take herself out of this world in a way that is deemed virtuous and that allows the name of wife to be restored to her.⁷⁴

Still, the power Anne gains is extremely limited. Certainly her ability to make the best of the situation is thoroughly and, in Green's case, convincingly argued, but the assertion that Anne's starvation is a powerful performative act ignores the price she pays.

In a related but more encompassing study, Gutierrez interrogates the connections between fasting, exorcism, and Puritanism in the play, arguing for a parallel between seducers of women and demons and suggesting that Mistress Anne's starvation is simultaneously an act of religious salvation and political resistance.⁷⁵ Her assertion that "Anne takes her fate into her own hands,

contravening her husband's mild sentence through a kind of self-slaughter" is more tempered and convincing.⁷⁶ Additionally, Wall suggests that "when Anne decides to commit suicide, she picks self-starvation as her means, not only to symbolize a necessary denial of appetite and the flesh but also to seal her body from now suspect incorporations."⁷⁷ Like Gutierrez and Wall, I accept the agency of Anne's choice but hesitate to proclaim it uncomplicatedly powerful.

Anne's starvation reflects and prods the outer edges of consumption and justice. While the ending of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is not any less troubling than that of the other two tragedies discussed in this chapter, her decision to allow her body to consume its own flesh becomes a corporeally articulate way of expressing the burden of guilt and grief derived from her decisions and circumstances. Her expression of this burden with a disordered (quashed) appetite parallels the behavior of Nick and then Frankford as keepers of the knowledge of her illicit sexual activity and deepens the play's association between eating and sex, table and bed. Faced with a fate of living a life of solitude and disgrace, and absent any other options, Anne depletes the "polluted" body that has propagated her sin. The idea of self-consumption applies whether she is actually starving (as Heywood seems to suggest) or, as would be physiologically more appropriate and more swift, dying of dehydration. Either way she is using strict bodily control in order to diminish the body she previously failed to control.

In these three plays, attempts to achieve justice are closely connected to the consumption of human flesh through cannibalism, starvation, or both. Their plots explore the difficult and fascinating situations at the boundaries of acceptable consumption, reflecting and interpreting for the audience the ways in which the consumption of human flesh contributed to ideas of justice in early modern England. By feeding Chiron and Demetrius to their mother, re-assimilating them

into the body from which they were born, *Titus Andronicus*'s Titus attempts to end the cycle of revenge perpetuated between him and Tamora. While his revenge successfully restores his family's status and effectively dispenses of his enemies, it clearly goes too far, shifting the audience's sympathies to Tamora and her unwitting cannibalism. Titus and Tamora have both attempted to exact revenge through human flesh, but neither has successfully restored any kind of balance.

Through its treatment of nutritional excess and austerity, *Timon of Athens* offers a perspective on the differences between virtuous and sinful foods. When Timon leaves his estate and abjures the society of men, he does so not simply as a victim, but as an unwise man whose immoderation has led to his circumstances. As his fortune and estate disintegrate, he is forced to recognize and bear the burden for his choices. Timon's adoption of Apemantus's philosophy and behavior are a means of repentance, self-cleansing, and self-preservation. The representations of meat and wine in this play emphasize the destructiveness of Timon's prior overconsumption; the portrayal of roots and water depict his reconstitution of his body. Timon has abjured the unwholesome meat and wine of his former table and seeks to remake his body out of simple, humble roots and water. Timon's attempts at justice seem to fail utterly at restoring balance, however. Timon fails at moderation on both ends of the spectrum.

Finally, Mistress Anne's act of starvation in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* should be read as an act of self-consumption in which she depletes the flesh that has propagated her sin. While the ending of this play is troubling and problematic, from the perspective of justice, Anne's decision to starve to death allows an expression of a burden which otherwise would remain untold. Anne uses strict bodily control to return herself to the community she has lost.

When she ultimately dies, she does so surrounded by her family and friends. Anne uses her starvation to articulate her guilt and expunge her body, the material component of her sin.

Situations at the extremes of consumption in early modern tragedy raise questions about the material consequences of the active and passive consumption of human flesh. Since food and drink are important conduits of cultural meaning, the situations surrounding the consumption of human flesh are significant. Attempts at grappling with justice and consumption in political tragedies such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens* may seem less straightforward to critics and audiences because of these plays' alienation from the everyday tasks of food acquisition, preparation, and consumption. While Titus and his family sit down around their dinner table, and while plenty of eating happens around the tables of Timon, neither of these plays reveals the kind of intimate daily happenings around the preparation, serving, and consumption of food that predominate *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. The power of food and flesh, then, might seem most naturally situated around the domestic tragedy's ever-present dinner table, wielded by the women who were most intimately familiar with the necessarily "meaty" operations of running a household. The sphere of the domestic tragedy genre, conversely, may spur critics to pronounce *A Woman Killed with Kindness* a celebration of female agency rather than a troubling story of guilt-induced anorexia with a well-ordered outcome. A material analysis of the foods at the consumptive extremes not only reveals how early modern dramatists and audiences perceived appetite as an instrument for revenge, penitence, and redemption, then, but also demonstrates who might be judged as capable of successfully performing such acts.

In Conclusion

In this dissertation, I argue that food is an important (and sometimes misinterpreted) component of early modern power structures. Analyzing food in these works allows us to bring forth new ideas and information that enhance our understanding of the scenes in which food appears, deepen our appreciation of the social dynamics of early modern England, and qualify the conclusions of scholars on plays that feature food. My project's contribution lies in the information brought forth by my methodology, which is a material analysis of food in the plays – a recognition that ideas change things (or, in this case, ideas change foods). Rather than competing with symbolic readings, this approach engages and enhances them.

In Chapter 1, I argue that these plays reflect and contribute to the changing food culture engendered by the burgeoning market economy and scarcity in 1613-14 London, showing how ordinary people could exercise power through their access to food. In Chapter 2, I argue that the disordered consumption Prince Hal engages in with Falstaff emerges as war and political disorder in England's body politic. In Chapter 3, I argue that while careful material consideration of the pregnancy cravings of the Duchess of Vanholt, Mistress Elbow, the Duchess of Malfi, and Mistress Placentia suggests the presence of simple and common pregnancy-related vitamin deficiencies to today's reader, these depictions of the uniquely vulnerable pregnant body participate in an escalating narrative of female immoderation for early modern audiences. In Chapter 4, I argue that a material analysis of the foods at the extremes of consumption – feasting, cannibalism, fasting, and starving – reveals how early modern dramatists and audiences perceived appetite as a tool for revenge, repentance, and redemption.

Early modern dramatic characters use food and consumption to wield, reveal, and limit power within early modern drama just as the consumers of drama did within early modern

English culture. In addition to all the things we might expect about the experience of food, its necessity and perishability would have been conspicuous to the early modern viewers. Food, especially in times of scarcity, represented a great deal of power. Drama both affected and reflected common understandings of how bodies were constituted through actions of consumption. My project also raises important questions of historical representation, religion, dramatic genre, and supply lines. While they are outside the scope of the present material cultural analysis, they are important issues that I hope to raise in future work.

The material components of appetite reflect and recast early modern power structures within drama, destabilizing the patterns of control and ownership in the food market economy, causing political dysfunction in England's body politic, constructing and revealing the social archetype of the pregnant woman, and exploring the social acceptability of extreme forms of justice. Knowledge taken for granted by the contemporaries of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, Webster, and Heywood has faded alongside the popularity and availability of many food and drink items, and readers have replaced such knowledge with assumptions informed by their own culture's food beliefs and practices. Acknowledging that beliefs about food have changed in the last 400 years is easy enough; temporarily suspending our current exaltation of, for example, fresh, local produce for long enough to read a scene or a play with an appreciation of the early modern *knowledge* of the danger of fresh fruit is far more difficult. This work of material analysis is what I have sought to undertake in my project.

Notes to Chapter 4

¹ Unless otherwise noted, references to *A Woman Killed with Kindness* are from Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, ed. Brian Scobie (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

² Joan Fitzpatrick, "Foreign Appetites and Alterity: Is there an Irish Context for *Titus Andronicus*?" *Connotations* 11.2-3 (2001/2002): 127-145.

³ Joan Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 119-125.

⁴ David Fredrick, "Titus Androgynous: Foul Mouths and Troubled Masculinity," *Arethusa* 41.1 (winter 2008): 205-233.

⁵ Tracy Thong, "Performances of the Banquet Course in Early Modern Drama," in *Renaissance Food from Rabelias to Shakespeare: Culinary Readings and Culinary Histories*, ed. Joan Fitzpatrick (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 107-125.

⁶ Fitzpatrick *Food in Shakespeare*, 113-119.

⁷ Fitzpatrick *Food in Shakespeare*, 119. Additionally, In her study of Caliban's diet, Fitzpatrick addresses both *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens*: Joan Fitzpatrick, "I Must Eat my Dinner," in *Renaissance Food from Rabelias to Shakespeare: Culinary Readings and Culinary Histories*, ed. Joan Fitzpatrick (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 127-143.

⁸ Robert S. Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," *ShakespeareQuarterly* 31.1 (Spring 1980): 23-24.

⁹ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, 125.

¹⁰ Margaret B. Bryan, "Food Symbolism in *A Woman Killed With Kindness*," *Renaissance Papers* (1974): 9-17.

¹¹ Nancy Gutierrez, *Shall She Famish Then* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 35-51. Gutierrez argues that Anne's fasting is a kind of exorcism in an earlier essay, "Exorcism by Fasting in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*: A Paradigm of Puritan Resistance?" *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 33 (1994): 43-62.

¹² Christopher Frey and Leanore Lieblen, "'My breast sear'd': The Self-Starved Female Body and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *Early Theatre* 7.1 (2004): 45-48.

¹³ Reina Green, "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery in *A Woman Killed With Kindness*," *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 31.4 (2005): 53-74.

¹⁴ David Frederick argues that the many open mouths in Julie Taymor's 1999 *Titus* represent roman decadence and the uncontrolled female appetite (205-208).

¹⁵ "shive, n.1," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

¹⁶ Tamora mixes up her insects here, suggesting that wasps produce honey. Later, Marcus refers to Lavinia's "honey breath." (2.4.25).

¹⁷ As she curses Tamora and the brothers for what they are about to do, Lavinia also refers to food: "The milk thou sucked'st from her did turn to marble, / Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny" (2.3.144-45). Lavinia thinks, with some dissonance, of Chiron and Demetrius breastfeeding from their mother as babies, hypothesizing that they acquired hardness, rather than nutrition, from her milk.

¹⁸ "Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave, / Expecting ever when some envious surge / Will in his brinish bowels swallow him" (3.1.95-97).

¹⁹ “brine, n.,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

²⁰ Blood and breastmilk were understood as fungible in early modern medicine. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993), 95.

²¹ “honey, n. and adj.,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000).

²² “Clover, Alsike and Other Clovers (*Trifolium hybridum* L. and other species),” University of Illinois Veterinary Medicine Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, <http://www.library.illinois.edu/vex/toxic/alsike/alsike.htm> (accessed 3 January 2011).

²³ Catherine Armstrong, “‘Bioled and Stewed with Roots and Herbs’: Everyday Tales of Cannibalism in Early Modern Virginia,” in *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early modern England*, ed. Garthine Walker and Angela McShane-Jones (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 169.

²⁴ Armstrong continues, “Far from being an extraordinary, horrific occurrence, the act of eating human flesh was part of a number of complex discourses and had a wide variety of meanings during this period” (170).

²⁵ Fitzpatrick, “Is there an Irish Context” 130.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick, “Is there an Irish Context” 136.

²⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Food in Shakespeare*, 123.

²⁸ Julia Briggs, *This Stage-Play World: Texts and Contexts 1580-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 26-29.

²⁹ Briggs, *This Stage-Play World*, 27.

³⁰ Briggs, *This Stage-Play World*, 29-30.

³¹ Briggs, *This Stage-Play World*, 28.

³² Additionally, In Act 4, Scene 3, Timon tells the bandits that that their desire for meat is ultimately cannibalistic (4.3.409-18). Timon begins this passage by reiterating the play's theme that appetites are destructive. Then he offers the earth's roots, its water ("a hundred springs"), and several suggestions for edible plants. The bandits, however, cannot fathom such a lifestyle. Timon replies by suggesting that eating beasts, birds, and fishes is equivalent to eating men, saying that if they eat the former, they "must eat men."

³³ As this transpires, the first Stranger, observing the beginning of Timon's fall from wealth, innocently claims: "For mine own part, / I never tasted Timon in my life" (3.2.70-71).

³⁴ Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 23-24.

³⁵ Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 23.

³⁶ Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 24.

³⁷ Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 27.

³⁸ Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 25.

³⁹ Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 24.

⁴⁰ Briggs, *This Stage-Play World*, 24-25.

⁴¹ Thong, "Performances of the Banquet Course," 111.

⁴² Miola, "Timon in Shakespeare's Athens," 24.

⁴³ Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor, 2004), 645.

⁴⁴ John M. Wallace, "'Timon of Athens' and the Three Graces: Shakespeare's Senecan Study," *Modern Philology* 83.4 (May 1986): 358.

⁴⁵ Wallace, “‘Timon of Athens’ and the Three Graces,” 358, emphasis added.

⁴⁶ In addition to serving meat and wine together Timon associates the juice of grapes with blood: “Go suck the subtle blood o’th’ grape / Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth, / and so scape hanging” (4.3.422-24).

⁴⁷ Alan Davidson and Tom Jaine, eds., “medlar,” *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 496.

⁴⁸ Fitzpatrick, “Food in Shakespeare,” 116.

⁴⁹ Interestingly, the play opens with a prologue that encourages the audience to enter the world of the play through their suspension of disbelief. The audience is asked to imagine that the meager items on stage are grander than they appear: “Our coarse fare, banquets; our thin water, wine” (Prologue 9). They will use coarse fare and water on the stage, but the audience is to imagine they are eating banquets and drinking wine. This meta-theatrical statement calls attention to the material props used upon the stage as well as the importance of eating and drinking in the play. The play’s use of food again extends into meta-theatricality as Jenkin explains the servants’ bustle of meal preparation to the audience: “You may see, my masters, though it be afternoon with you, ‘tis but early days with us, for we have not dined yet. Stay but a little, I’ll but go in and help to bear up the first course and come to you again presently” (4.105-109). Jenkin directly addresses the audience, for whom it is afternoon; he uses food to indicate it is morning in the play, which is knowable by the fact that the characters have not yet had their dinner. He then excuses himself to help serve the food. This again calls attention both to the story as performance and to the importance of food and consumption on the stage. In the epilogue, the play is compared to wine, subject to the divergent tastes of the audience members: “Thus, gentlemen,

you see how in one hour / The wine was new, old, flat, sharp, sweet, and sour” (11-12). “Excuse us, then; good wine may be disgraced / When every several mouth hath sundry taste” (17-18).

⁵⁰ Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 203. She continues, “The verticality of domestic hierarchy necessarily falters as agents dissolve into limbs caught in furious circuits of exchange.”

⁵¹ Green, “Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery,” 56.

⁵² Green, “Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery,” 53-74.

⁵³ Frankford’s generosity differs in degree from Timon’s, but otherwise they are quite similar.

⁵⁴ “table, n.,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, OED Online (Oxford University Press, 4 Apr. 2000), Definition 6b.

⁵⁵ Bryan, “Food Symbolism,” 9.

⁵⁶ Frey and Lieblein, “My breast sear’d,” 58.

⁵⁷ Bryan, “Food Symbolism,” 16.

⁵⁸ Green, “Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery,” 63.

⁵⁹ Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 203.

⁶⁰ Green, “Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery,” 58-59.

⁶¹ Again, note similarities between Frankford’s Nick and Timon’s Flavius.

⁶² It is also worth noting that when Nick approaches him, Frankford assumes he needs an advance on his pay. He reproaches his man, “And unthrift-like would *eat* into your wages / Ere you have earned it” (8.29-30, emphasis added).

⁶³ Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 206.

⁶⁴ Bryan, "Food Symbolism," 13.

⁶⁵ Green, "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery," 53-74.

⁶⁶ Frey and Lieblein, "My breast sear'd," 45.

⁶⁷ Frey and Lieblein, "My breast sear'd," 45-48.

⁶⁸ Frey and Lieblein, "My breast sear'd," 51.

⁶⁹ Frey and Lieblein, "My breast sear'd," 51. They go on to say that "'In deciding to starve, Anne uses her body to resist confinements imposed on her by Frankford's patriarchal worldview and its normative social expectations based on eating'" (54).

⁷⁰ Frey and Lieblein, "My breast sear'd," 60.

⁷¹ Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 189-218.

⁷² Green, "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery," 65.

⁷³ Green, "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery," 65-66.

⁷⁴ Green, "Open Ears, Appetite, and Adultery," 66.

⁷⁵ Gutierrez, *Shall She Famish Then?* 35-51.

⁷⁶ Gutierrez, *Shall She Famish Then?* 36.

⁷⁷ Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 204.

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